

















THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED.





THE SECOND COMING  
OF CHRIST

PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED:

BEING

LECTURES

DELIVERED DURING LENT, 1844,

AT ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England.

WITH A PREFACE, ✓

BY THE HON. AND REV. H. MONTAGU VILLIERS, A.M.,

RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

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## P R E F A C E.

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As this is the second course of Sermons which has been preached in St. George's Church, it has been thought right that I should, as Incumbent of that church, prefix a few words by way of introduction. I cheerfully comply, though I feel that the majority of the preachers are already so much better known as students of prophecy than myself, that if I were not to state that I make these few remarks by *request*, it might appear presumption on my part.

There is much reason for thankfulness to Almighty God that this most important part of his holy book, "The sure word of prophecy," continues to excite increased and increasing attention.

The sale of the former volume, the rapid demand for the second edition, the attendance on this second course of sermons, all prove that a lively interest is awakened, and that the Church, in all her members, at least, is not unmindful of the words of her great Bishop, " Watch, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

That there are dangers connected with the study of unfulfilled prophecy no one can deny, but what doctrine of Scripture may not be wrested to our own destruction?

The doctrine of justification by faith only, without works, is, as the Eleventh Article of our Church affirms, " a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort," yet we cannot deny that wicked men have perverted this, to the denial of holiness being required by the Lord. Nevertheless, none but they who love the fundamental principle of Popery venture to deny that justification by faith is a scriptural doctrine, and therefore the doctrine taught by the Church of England; and no one who adheres to God's Word, and can confide in his truth, thinks of refusing to receive

the doctrine, because it has been or may be perverted by the ungodly. Why, then, are we to act differently in the case of unfulfilled prophecy?

There may be wild enthusiasts, there may be men who will make millenarian views *essential* to salvation. There may be an undue excitement raised in the minds of others, but surely this is no reason against a calm and dispassionate examination of the Word of God, "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." On the contrary, if there be danger of rash men undertaking the subject and thus perilling the soul, it is the greater reason why others of less visionary habits, and calmer temperaments, should endeavour to set before their fellow-Christians, truths which, when properly stated, are so calculated to warn the unruly, and to cheer the anxious traveller on his road to Zion. Such, I trust, will be found to be the case in the present course of sermons. They were delivered with no rash excitement, they were heard with serious attention. Deep and solemn conviction seemed to pervade preachers and hearers that they were in God's house, endeavouring to under-



stand God's Word, with a desire humbly to carry out God's will.

I now commit the volume to the press, with the humble confidence that the course was undertaken with a single eye to God's glory, and the earnest Prayer that whatever has been faithfully spoken, may be effectually received to the Salvation of souls, and the Glory of our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

H. MONTAGU VILLIERS.

BLOOMSBURY RECTORY,  
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## LECTURE I.

### THE MANIFESTATION OF THE CHURCH AT THE COMING OF THE LORD.

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BY THE REV. EDWARD AURIOL, M.A.,

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EPHESIANS V. PART OF 25TH, 26TH, & 27TH VERSES.

*“ Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

WE find the subject of the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ continually occurring in the Word of God in connexion with practical truths, and topics of practical instruction. We are not merely told that our blessed Saviour will come in

his glory, but this truth is referred to by the Divinely inspired writers, as bearing upon the temper, the spirit, the duties, and the practice of the Christian. The doctrines contained in the Scriptures, are for the most part revealed to us in the same manner, but the constant allusion which is made to the second advent in the writings of the apostles, shows the importance which the Lord attaches to it, as calculated to animate the hopes of the believer, and as unfolding to us what are the future blessings which await the Church. It is proposed, brethren, in the present course of lectures, to draw attention to the bearing of this truth on practical subjects connected with the Christian life, and it has been assigned to me in commencing it, to bring before you an anticipation which is truly of a glorious character, namely, the Manifestation of the Church at the coming of the Lord.

In investigating the subject of unfulfilled prophecy, and in attempting to show what events are to be expected by the Church, it is most important that we should distinguish between that which is merely conjectural, and that which is revealed to us in the Divine Word; that we should remember the difference between a spirit of vague curiosity, or the indulgence of an ingenious imagination on the one hand, and a spirit of sober and scriptural

inquiry on the other ;—between the attempt to lay down some theory as to future events which we think likely to be brought about, and the collecting from Scripture what is the testimony of God as to what his providence has ordained shall come to pass. The former is presumptuous and vain, and may lead us into many errors ; the latter is the duty of every Christian, and an especial blessing may be expected in the humble and prayerful endeavour to discharge it, in dependance upon God's teaching. There are some events, such as the second coming of our Lord, which are repeatedly stated as certainly to be looked for ; but how some of the practical details are to be filled up in the bringing about the scheme of his providence, and in preparing for his coming ; what is to be the exact course of the events which are to lead to the fulfilment of all His glorious purposes, or how certain parts even of those things which are declared to us are exactly to be fitted into one another, this is not by any means so clearly made known, and therefore a spirit of humble teachableness and of meek forbearance becomes us in all these studies : for the great object of God's revealed Word is to sanctify his people ; and these blessed hopes are presented to us, not to afford us topics of mere speculation, but to animate us in his service, to encourage us in fighting the good

fight of faith, to quicken us in our apprehension of truth, to lead us to endure with patience that which his wise providence may assign us, and to stir up within us all those holy and godly affections which may fit and prepare us for the full enjoyment of himself. May he graciously grant that the subjects now to be brought before us may tend to further in us these blessed effects, that they may be so treated as to open more fully to our view what good things the Lord hath prepared for them that love him, and awaken in us that spirit of lively faith, of purifying hope, and of holy diligence, which may cause us to be truly amongst those who, when our Lord shall come, shall be ready to open to him immediately.

I purpose, brethren, to endeavour to show,

I. What is comprehended in the expression, “The Church,” which is to be manifested.

II. What is implied in this manifestation.

III. The time when this manifestation shall take place.

I. What is meant by the Church? And here we may well take up the language of the Psalmist and say, “Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God!” The Church is represented in my text, as in many other passages of Scripture, as the Spouse of Christ,—united to him; one with him, by a bond never to be dissolved, the

object of his tenderest love, of his most watchful care, for whom he has engaged to provide through *Eternity*; as his bride, a sharer of his triumphs, a partaker of his glory. The Church thus viewed consists of the whole body of the faithful, even from the beginning of time; it is composed of all those who have been given to Christ by the Father from eternity; for it is of the whole body of that Church that he speaks when he says, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but *should raise it up again at the last day.*” And, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: *and I will raise him up at the last day.*” And again, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: *and I will raise him up at the last day.*” (John vi. 39, 40, 44.) It comprises all those for whom in an especial manner Christ gave himself. Although the full sufficiency of the satisfaction of the atonement of Christ for the sins of the whole world, is, as we think, plainly declared in the Scriptures; though we believe that the invitations of the Gospel are to be addressed to “every creature,” that all are to be invited *as sinners* to receive its blessings by believing on the Son of God unto eternal life, yet there is a peculiar sense in which he is revealed to us as having “purchased to himself his Church



with his own blood," as having "laid down his life for the sheep;" and the Church comprehends all those whom he loved from the beginning, not because he saw any thing good in them, for that they were polluted, and defiled, and unclean, is clear from the fact stated, that he gave himself for them, "*to cleanse*" them, "*to purify*," "*to sanctify*" them. They owe to *him* all that has been provided for their salvation, for they were "*chosen in him* before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before him;" and the passage which we are considering, declares that he gave himself for them, that this end for which they were chosen in him, might be accomplished. My text leads us also to view the Church as comprehending all who have been brought, or are now being brought, or who are still to be brought, to God through his blessing on the means of grace; "that he might sanctify it with the washing of water by the Word;" —not *merely with the washing of water* is its purity effected, but with the *washing of water by the Word*; when through the Word of truth, received by faith, his people are "begotten again that they may be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," and, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," they show forth the power of his grace, and prove themselves his by bringing forth fruit unto holiness. We are told besides, that it is he himself who

applies the Word for this purpose ; that “ *he* might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word ;” and thus taught of him, thus led to believe on him, and thus made clean by the Word which he hath spoken, numbers are now in this preparatory state being added to the Church daily of such as shall be saved,—such as shall then be found truly to be of those whose manifestation at the day of Christ it is our present object specially to consider.

II. We proceed then, secondly, to the consideration of the nature of that manifestation. My text brings it before us as Christ presenting to himself his Church, “ not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.”

1. It will be glorious in its completeness. Never before shall the whole Church have been seen together—*then* he will have accomplished the number of his elect ; then shall be assembled those who by the workings of God’s grace have at different times been fashioned and prepared as members of his body, all will have “ come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;” and the Church shall “ look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners.” That prayer will be answered

which our Lord offered up just before he was crucified, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 20—23.) Then shall be brought about that complete unity, not merely in spirit and in heart, but in every thing which can be imagined to constitute the perfect uniformity which has so long been desired by the Church during her time of conflict. Not one of the Lord's people will be wanting, all who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" will be there; centuries may have separated between some of the members of that body, but then the glory of the Church will be that it is united and complete. The saints who lived before the flood will be manifested, for it was for their comfort that Enoch prophesied of "the Lord's coming with ten thousand of his saints." The patriarchs, who lived in a later age, will have the desire of their souls

fulfilled, and they shall not be disappointed, of whom St. Paul says, that “they looked for a city which hath foundations;” that they would not accept “deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection,” and concerning whom he declares that “God hath prepared for them a city,” and yet assures us that they “received not the promises; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Heb. xi. 39—40.) The prophets will be there, for it is of one of them we are expressly told, that “he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days” (Dan. xii. 13); and millions of those whom the Lord has known and sealed as his, but who have passed through the world unknown to nearly all besides, will be partakers of that glory. Those who are alive and remain, though they will not prevent them that are asleep, shall come forth with them to hail the bridegroom when he claims his bride, and will thus swell the numbers of his glorified ones, and though the flock has ever been a little one through the successive periods of its sojourn in the wilderness, the Church will at last be glorious both in its numbers and in its unity: “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.”

2. The Church will be glorious in its character.

“He shall present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but it shall be holy and without blemish.” It will be free from all imperfections. There will be no spot of false doctrine or erroneous opinion or mistaken notion, puffing up with pride, rankling with self-conceit, or working injuriously in the minds of any of those who shall then meet round the throne: there will be no spot of impurity of imagination, of earthly defilement, or of contaminating influence remaining in one of those who shall make up that blessed company; there will be none of those “spots” of which the Apostle Jude speaks when he says, of false and unworthy professors, “these are spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with you;” for at the marriage supper of the Lamb there can be no place for such; there can be no place for any who are not clothed in the pure robe of their Redeemer’s completed righteousness, and who are not beautified by the garment of his then perfected salvation. The Church shall be without wrinkle or blemish or anything that can lead to such; then shall be removed from her for ever, all that could by possibility raise on her bright and happy countenance a wrinkle of sorrow, or a symptom of decay; there will be no danger then of her being like the Church at Ephesus, when it had “lost its first love,”

for all her affections will be everlastingly engaged in devotedness to him with whom she is made for ever one, and the truth of that saying will be felt with a force, and displayed in a manner utterly beyond the utmost stretch of our present comprehension to conceive; "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.)

3. For once more, the Church will be glorious in complete conformity to the likeness of her Lord, as well as in the perfect enjoyment of him. It is thus that St. John presents to us the hope of the Church: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." To be spotless, to be blameless, to be pure, this is truly to be like the Lord Jesus, like him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." As the Psalmist expresses it, "When I awake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it." Consider, brethren, how glorious this is! like her Lord in all respects; like him in spirit, in temper, and in mind, purified even as he is pure; like him in outward appearance, each member clothed with that body which is from heaven, for "He shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 21.) This will constitute the perfect consummation and bliss of the Church both in body and soul.



III. We are next to consider the time when this shall take place. It shall be *at the coming of the Lord*. This is apparent from many plain passages of Scripture. It is declared, for instance, in the Epistle to the Colossians, that “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. iii. 4.) It is stated by St. John, in that passage already referred to, that “When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 2.) The manner in which this shall take place is detailed to us in the Epistle to the Thessalonians; “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) These statements positively and distinctly mark the time of the manifestation of the Church to be at the coming of the Lord; but there are others also from which the same truth may be no less certainly gathered. As for instance; in the parable of the wheat and the tares, we read, “So shall it be in the end of this world,” or dispensation (*αιωνος*). “The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom



all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : then shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. *Then* shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 41—43.) In the close of the Epistle of Jude, we meet with the expression, "He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy" (Jude 24); evidently referring to the glorious state of the Church represented in my text, when the Lord shall present her to himself as his wife. Now there are several passages which speak of this act, as to take place at his second coming in his glory. Thus in the nineteenth chapter of Revelations, immediately after the destruction of Babylon, and directly preceding the account of the first resurrection, the apostle is permitted to behold the glory of the Lord in his Church, under the same figure. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

(Rev. xix. 7—9.) In those chapters too in the Gospels, where he speaks of his coming under the figure of a bridegroom, the time when this manifestation will take place seems to be established. Whenever, therefore, the Lord shall come, *then* this glorious anticipation shall be fulfilled, and not before. Now we might take it for granted, that it has been proved in our former course of lectures, that the coming of Christ will be pre-millennial, that it is an event to be speedily expected, and that it will, as we are taught, find the world in a state of general unpreparedness, as it was with the people of old in the days of Noe; and that “there will be mockers at the last day, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” (Matthew xxiv. 28; 2 Peter iii. 4.) But there are other passages of Scripture relating to the glorious manifestation of the Church which confirm much the view of the personal coming of Christ, as preceding and bringing in the millennium. For instance, we know that Enoch is declared to have prophesied of “The coming of the Lord, with ten thousand of his saints;” but then if we compare with this prophecy, one which we find in Zechariah, we meet with nearly a similar statement; “The Lord thy God shall come, and all his saints with thee;” but this coming of the Lord with his saints is here associated with events,

which are quite inconsistent with the idea of millennial tranquillity and blessedness, and which it would appear from other Scriptures will immediately precede the reign of righteousness, for “when the nations shall be gathered together against Jerusalem to battle,” “Then the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” (Zechariah xiv. 3, 4.) If we are to believe that Christ’s coming with his saints is literally to take place, what reason have we to suppose that his standing on Mount Olivet is to be taken otherwise than literally; and if so these events occur at the same time. And this view of the matter is yet more fully confirmed, by the statements of Scripture with regard to other events connected with that period. He shall come we are told to take “vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. i. 7—9.) “He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” (Psalm ii. 9.) But, he says, “He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will *I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers,*

even as I have received of my Father.” (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) Again, there are passages which speak not only of the overthrow of the wicked, but of the establishment of the reign of righteousness on the earth in connexion with the resurrection and the manifestation of the saints. The groaning of the whole creation and its subjection to vanity, will last *till the manifestation of the sons of God*; which is further explained to mean, “The adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. viii. 22, 23.) And compare this with those places where mention is made of the removal of the curse from the face of the earth during the period of the millennium, and surely it will be apparent that the resurrection glory must precede it. (See Isaiah xi. 4—9; lxv. 17—25. Ezekiel xxxiv. 25, 27.) So in the twenty-fifth of Isaiah, we meet with this statement: “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.” (Isaiah xxv. 6—8.) This doubtless points to the time when “the vail shall be taken away from the Jews,” and when their “fulness” shall be, indeed, “the riches of the Gentiles,” and “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as

the waters cover the sea ;” but immediately connected with this is a declaration of triumph over death and the grave ; “ He will swallow up death in victory,”—a prophecy which St. Paul tells us, shall be fulfilled when “ the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed ” (1 Cor. xv. 52) ; an event, therefore, shown to synchronize exactly with the glorious spread of the light of God’s truth, for the blessedness of the nations. Then if we refer to the statements in Scripture of the employments of the risen saints, we have another proof that the time of this manifestation of the Church will be at the coming of the Lord. Thus we find it declared by our Saviour, for the encouragement of his disciples in their devotion to him ; “ Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me ; in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew xix. 28.) And St. Paul asks the question of the Corinthians, as though he spoke to them of that which was a truth generally received among them : “ Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ? ” (1 Cor. vi. 2.) Not only the apostles, but the saints, all believers, as appears from the context ; the meaning of which passages is fully illustrated by the expression

occurring in the new song of the four beasts and the four and twenty elders before the throne ; “ Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

We do not attempt to offer any conjecture as to the nature of the offices to be performed by the risen and glorified saints, who shall reign with their Lord, as we are taught in the twentieth chapter of Revelations, “ a thousand years ; ” we know that they will have bodies like unto his glorious body, and the appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, as also that of our Lord to his disciples after his resurrection, proves that they may be made visible and tangible to men in the flesh. But it is not our wish, for it is neither necessary nor profitable for us, to enter into any speculation on the subject which might lead us one degree beyond what is clearly revealed ; all that we desire to do in bringing forward these proofs that the time of the manifestation of the Church will be at the coming of the Lord, and the commencement of the reign of righteousness, is to show that we are adopting no fanciful interpretation of Scripture, but the plain and simple one ; that we are not indulging in any



mere imaginative scheme, but setting forth that which appears to be distinctly revealed. And if the events connected with the subject are so glorious, that they are far beyond our powers of conception to realize, this should be no reason why we should not believe and expect them. On the contrary, we are told that "it does not yet appear what we shall be." Whilst at the same time, as a matter of practical experience, what a tenfold interest does this view of the subject give to us, in all those promises of triumph over the enemies of Christ, and of the glorious establishment of his truth which are to be fulfilled; since we are here taught, not that these things may take place years or centuries after we have passed from that world in which they will all be transacted, but that assuredly, if we are Christ's, savingly united to him, we shall be witnesses ourselves of his triumph, and with risen and glorified bodies have a part in the blessed reign over the nations. "To him that overcometh," he says, "will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. iii. 21.)

This leads us then to conclude the subject with a few brief practical remarks, as pointing out the instruction which it is calculated to convey to us. In the first place, an anticipation of this glory

wonderfully raises our sense of the obligation which we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is much for us to be enabled to see pardon, peace, safety, sanctification to be ours for his sake ; but when we can in any degree realize that “ Christ is in us the hope of glory,” and that we shall so share in what is revealed to us of his glory, “ that the world may know that the Father has loved us even as he loved Christ,” what effect ought such a hope as this to have upon our souls ! If we be indeed living members of that Church which is the Lamb’s wife, how full of love, how full of tenderness, how full of earnest longing ought to be our expectation of him !

Secondly, How encouraging should this be to the fainting, weary, tried servants of God. The great object of hope set before us is the total destruction of the body of this death under which the believer now groans—the possession in all its fulness of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We cannot imagine a greater contrast than that which shall be exhibited in this glorious manifestation, compared with the present state of many of the Lord’s children, but in reality it is not nearly so great as that which is exhibited in the history of our blessed Lord himself. Behold him a helpless infant, the despised Nazarene, the man of sorrows, the weary, fainting wanderer, the scorn and deri-



sion of an ungodly people, dying as a condemned criminal; his body enclosed in the dark tomb; and yet, whilst all this was being enacted, his was the hidden glory of that "Holy One," "whose goings forth have been from everlasting;" it was the spotless Lamb of God whose innocence was maligned—the Lord of life and glory whom they shrouded in the grave. No depth of humiliation to which the servants of Christ can be exposed, no lengthened period of suffering, no agonies under which blessed martyrs have died—no extent of persecution which may yet be in store for the Church, can ever equal *such a contrast as this*; and may not the recollection of it, together with the prophetic warning of our Lord, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord," and "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated *me* before it hated you," support the Church under her severest conflicts, leading her to the blessed assurance, "If we suffer with him we shall be also glorified together."

Lastly, as affecting the preparation of his people. There is one remarkably expressive figure in reference to this subject in the book of Malachi, "In that day will the Lord make up his jewels." The precious stones which are taken from the bowels of the earth are fit emblems of the people of God,

then to be brought forth ; composed of the common materials of the flint and sand and clay which we see around us, they owe all their beauty and value to that secret transformation effected beneath the surface of the earth, which art has tried in vain to imitate, and which so fits them for their bright destiny, that when at length the mine is visited, and the sun shines upon them in his strength, the light streams from them with a brilliancy and splendour which dazzles and delights the eye, and which cannot be mistaken, so that they are owned at once as fitting ornaments of a monarch's crown. Oh ! brethren, this is like the work that is carrying on now in preparation for the great day ; the hidden secret operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of his people. By nature the children of wrath even as others, he forms in them that new creation which may fit them to be “ a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of our God.” When the Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon them, then shall the true character of that Divine work be recognised, in all its distinguishing, in all its surpassing brightness,—“ then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not :” “ they shall be as the stones of a crown :” then shall the hidden source of their light and glory,

even God their Saviour, be fully and everlastingly revealed.

Brethren, if this be so, see, I beseech you, that this work be really, effectually carried on in your hearts. Let all which we have been considering of the future blessedness of those whom God hath chosen to salvation in Christ, whom he is preparing now for this glory, constrain you to choose this blessed portion, to seek it as “The one thing needful,” to adopt as your own the touching earnest prayer of the Psalmist to a faithful prayer-hearing God, “Remember *me*, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people ; O ! visit *me* with thy salvation, that *I* may see the good of thy chosen, that *I* may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that *I* may glory with thine inheritance.” (Psalm cvi. 4, 5.)

## LECTURE II.

### THE ACCOUNT TO BE RENDERED WHEN THE LORD SHALL COME.

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BY THE REV. W. W. PYM, M.A.,

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[The reference to specific Scripture dates, upon which the proof of some of the conclusions in the following sermon is dependent, has been designedly omitted at the suggestion of one, to whose wishes, under the circumstances of the case, every deference is due: which fact, let it be remembered, occasions some curtailment of the sermon (p. 33—35), and renders the proof of a part of the doctrine in some respects incomplete. (P. 34, 41.)—W. W. P.]

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ROMANS XIV. 10—12.

*“ But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

THE subject contained in this passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, is that which has been

appointed for our meditation this night, a subject of chief importance to the whole Church of God, and therefore, I doubt not, deeply important to many in this congregation.

*The account to be rendered when the Lord shall come.*

In order rightly to understand it, I shall make the three following inquiries, and endeavour to furnish a scriptural reply to each.

I. *What manner of persons shall then render their account to God?*

II. *What period of time will be occupied by that act of judgment?*

III. *What will be the character of the account which shall then be rendered?*

And here in the contemplation of them we may feelingly exclaim, Who is sufficient for these things? But, under a sense of this our helplessness, we may look to him who “ascended up far above all heavens” to receive gifts for men. Oh! thou gracious Saviour, hast thou said, “Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you?” Behold, we ask, shall we not have? We seek, shall we not find? We knock, shall it not be opened unto us? Shed abroad abundantly in the hearts of all this people the grace of thy Holy Spirit; and give a double measure of the same to me, thy weak,

and most unworthy servant ; and oh, thou teacher of babes, teach me, enlighten my darkness, remove my ignorance, subdue my unbelief, and enable me to speak as the oracles of God, and be thou glorified by us with the Father and the Son in time, and in all eternity !

I. We have proposed to inquire, *What manner of persons shall then render their account to God ?*

A question has been often raised, whether the account of that day be the great assize, in which the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, the judge of all the earth ? One mode of settling this question will be *by considering the predicted accompaniments of Christ's second coming.*

The twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and the corresponding narrative in the Gospel of St. Luke furnish us, from the lips of our blessed Lord himself, with many of these particulars. Thus, in the former chapter, it is written ; “ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great

sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The tribulation here described is that under which God's ancient people have been groaning, now for 1800 years, and from which deliverance awaits them at the coming of the Lord. The circumstances here foretold have been considered, by very many expounders of the word, to have been fulfilled in the mystic or political heavens at the time of the French Revolution. Hence, if this be so, and these powers have been so shaken, the next event for which we are to look *from this prophecy*, and that which shall immediately precede the coming of the Lord, must be "*the sign of the Son of man in heaven.*" Some difficulty has been found in ascertaining what is meant by this sign. The most approved explanation of it I consider to be this; that it will be that glory which shall surround the Lord when he first appears in our heavens, accompanied by his shining hosts, the forerunner of his actual revelation, which shall cause all the tribes of the earth to mourn, being to them the beginning of sorrows; and, when this preceding sign shall have appeared, "then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Here observe how this harmonizes with what



the angels told those men of Galilee, who, with uplifted eyes had been watching their risen Lord in his glorious transit through the air, when “ he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.” “ A cloud received him out of their sight.” “ Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 11.)

The next revealed event of which we read is *The First Resurrection*. For the particulars of this wondrous scene we are indebted to the special revelations of the Lord. Thus, when St. Paul writes concerning it he says, “ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1 Cor. xv. 22, 23.) See here one characteristic feature of our God in all his works. Nothing of confusion, nothing of disorder. Where he acts the most perfect harmony is found, and the most complete order. In all the divine operations he leaves behind him, as it were, his own footprints, which tell where God has been. But, if anything of an opposite character have found its way into those works, upon which, when the Almighty operator looked, he pronounced



them “very good,” it must be set down, not to his account, but to the account of sin, which marred his beauteous work, and brought confusion into the moral as well as the natural part of his operations. When we hear of a resurrection of the dead, and consider the innumerable multitude who have returned to the dust of the earth, the mind of man might, almost of necessity, associate with such a scene more or less of confusion. The Apostle guards against it, being jealous for the honour of the Lord of Hosts. For he says, “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive: *but every man in his own order*. Christ the firstfruits.” How is this to be understood? Were none raised from the dead before his appearing in the flesh? Raised they were, as the Scriptures testify, but none were raised to die no more. In every recorded case it was but a lengthening of their days upon earth, and then they shortly returned to dust.

But, connected with this resurrection shall be, *the change of the living saints*. St. Paul was the appointed instrument of conveying this information to the Church. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall

be changed.” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) And lest any should think inconsistently of God, he further explains the Divine order in this part of “the working of his mighty power.” This he communicates to the Thessalonian Church. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 15—17.) The only question here to be decided is, *Whether any beside the saints shall partake of this resurrection?*

The words of Dan. xii. 2 on this subject have, I believe, been often misapplied. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” How may this passage be understood? For its explanation\* we must look to the longer revelations upon the subject contained in the Scriptures of the New Testament. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is found

\* See “Restitution of All Things.” P. 118.

distinctly stated in the Old. In the New many additional particulars are revealed respecting it. We turn, therefore, from the shorter passages of the one to the longer passages in the other, and, acting upon that principle, we cannot fail of arriving at one conclusion, namely, that the saints alone shall have part in the first resurrection. Thus Rev. xx. 4, 6, unfolds it, and 1 Cor. xv. 23 seals the truth, that, at his coming, "They that are Christ's" shall rise. Then of necessity they stand before the Son of man, for they rise "to meet the Lord in the air." Then of necessity must be their time of account. From which we gather this unavoidable conclusion, *that the saints, or justified persons, are the manner of men who will then render their account to God.* It may be objected that the Scriptures speak of a judgment to be executed on the ungodly world at that time; from which it is concluded that the ungodly as well as the righteous shall then stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We reply, that though the Scriptures do so speak, there is a material difference between *a judgment executed*, and *an account to be rendered*; and the real character of the former in the present case is described by our Lord himself. "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and

bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.—The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and *they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity*, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matt. xiii. 30, 38—43.) When a man has settled the affairs of his own house, he then directs attention to those things which are without; and so, in the present case, when the Lord shall have settled the claims of the members of his own household, the Church, and ordered the things which belong to his kingdom, then he shall turn to those who are without: then “the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

II. We are now to inquire, *What period of time shall be occupied by this act of judgment?*

The characteristic majesty of the Divine proceedings will not be changed in the present case, for he is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” We are apt to dishonour God by thinking of him as one of ourselves. True it is, that he stoops down to the measures of a man in his dealings with us. True, he binds himself by the limits of time, aye, and keeps them to a day and to an hour to fulfil his word. Yea, “the self-same day” it will come to pass because he hath said it. But in all this there is no haste. The habit of the divine mind is with eternal transactions: the Ancient of Days moves majestically in all his ways, and he “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. v. 2), knows not what it is to be in haste. Notwithstanding this, what have been our early associations with this subject? We have considered it an hasty work. We have thought how the Lord should come down from heaven suddenly upon this world; and having, by a miraculous movement settled all the intricate concerns of a thousand generations, almost in a moment of time, having turned the wicked into hell with all the people who forget God, that then he will return to heavenly places with his saints, there to reign with

them in glory everlasting. I believe I do not exaggerate the common faith, in the foregoing statement. Of the duration, as to time, of the account to be rendered by the saints when the Lord shall come, we have some intimation in the Scripture.

I know full well that many a one there is, who will travel with us step by step in our passage through these portions of the Divine Word; but, when we have arrived at this point, he will halt and walk no more with us. I therefore avoid entering into the particulars of this subject, and shall only observe generally that, if those expounders of God's truth are correct, who believe that the termination of Israel's trouble, as signified in some parts of Sacred Scripture, will take place at the time of the first resurrection, then the period which shall be occupied by the judgment of the saints, will be the number of years which must expire between the occurrence of those events, and the expiration of the last number revealed to Daniel (chap. xii. 12); and this period we believe to be twenty years.\*

Now when we consider the sum of that account, from the complicated interests of "a multitude which no man can number," we safely arrive at

\* The brevity and incompleteness of this part of our argument is explained by the notice, p. 24.



this conclusion, that the period thus intimated in Scripture, is not disproportioned to the amount of the work which shall then be required to be done.

III. We proceed lastly to consider, *the character of the account which shall then be rendered.*

We have already ascertained that the subjects of that judgment will be the saints, or justified persons; those who long before, having been justified by faith, have had peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The great question to be decided, in order to settle the character of their account, will be, Whether their sins shall be remembered in that day? And here I would put two questions:—the first, *Is it consistent with Probability that they should be?* The second, *Is it consistent with Revelation?*

Some may raise the question, whether Satan will then be permitted to appear as “the accuser of the brethren,” in that scene? But, I think, the Scripture is clear upon that subject, and when we read Rom. viii. 33, Isaiah xliii. 25, and liv. 17, our conclusion would be, that this is improbable. But, when we turn from these testimonies to that which Rev. xx. 2 affords, all doubt upon this subject seems to be removed, and the order of events as there recorded puts it, I think, beyond a question; because it is there revealed that before



the first resurrection, Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit.

*Is it, now, consistent with Probability that the sins of the saints shall be remembered in that day?*

When we consider the nature of the forgiveness of sin, at the conversion of the sinner, that it is plenary remission, and that the sinner is then considered perfectly just, by imputation, in the sight of an holy God, it appears improbable that sins so forgiven should be remembered again. Why amongst ourselves, if one man sin against another and he forgive him, is it consistent with any principle of right feeling that, after any period have elapsed, he should call that forgiven sin to remembrance? A principle of worldly honour would unhesitatingly condemn such a course; and the higher principle of the Gospel, which actuates a Christian man, would confirm it. But whence is this higher principle derived? It came down from God who gave the Gospel, and is therefore to be traced upward to himself; wherefore when he shall rend the heavens and come down, as the judge of all the earth, surely that same principle will be manifested, when he shall "give reward unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great." (Rev. xi. 18.) It is, moreover, hardly conceivable that "the spirits of just men made perfect," who

have been "with Christ," some for one, two, three, four, or even five thousand years, basking in his smile, rejoicing daily in his love, should after such a lengthened period of blessedness, leave that glorious condition of divine favour, and stand in the condition of culprits before the bar of that same God and Saviour; and be humbled before the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and Church of the first-born.

What! shall the great progenitor of all mankind be then arraigned before the bar of Christ for that tremendous sin, which enclosed within its teeming womb every iniquity which has blackened the dark page of man's eventful story, and has brought in its train all the misery and woe which have hung, like funeral trappings, around this dwelling-place of man? Shall that black act of prime rebellion be then dragged forth to light, and exhibited in all its fearful colours before their sons and daughters of every generation? Shall the sin of Noah, the father of a second world, be then exhibited? Shall the idolatry of Abraham, the father of the faithful, be remembered again? Shall the deceit of Jacob, the rightly called "Supplanter," be for a season once more substituted for the honourable title of Israel? Shall the murder and adultery of David, the man after God's own heart, once again see the light in all their native

deformity? and shall Peter's denial of his loved Lord, with every aggravation of bitter oaths and curses, be charged against him, who long since in real humiliation of spirit appealed to his reconciled master, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?" and Paul be arraigned before a cloud of witnesses, as "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious?" How inconsistent with the glorious accompaniments of that scene! Nay, rather will they then receive the "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them at that day: and not to them only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

But, if it be *inconsistent with Probability* that the sins of the saints shall be then remembered, what saith the Scripture? *Is it consistent with Revelation?*

From amidst the various testimonies which abound upon this subject, I select two. St. Paul in speaking of the future mercy of God to Israel (Heb. viii. 12); and, amongst other blessings promised on the day of their restoration to the Divine favour, he specifies this, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." If God promise that there shall be no more remembrance made of sin, when he restores Israel to his favour,

are we to suppose that he will act by another rule in dealing with his saints from among the Gentiles? That be far from thee, Lord. The difference in the judgment between the two will be this, that here, as elsewhere, the Jew shall have the precedence. "To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. ii. 7—11.) A second passage, which I adduce in support of this view, is found in the writings of St. John; "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (1 John ii. 28.) If the old sins of every believer are to be brought before the assembled Church of God at that time; if, before that cloud of witnesses, all those evils under which every member of that Church has been bowed down in the days of the flesh, are to be had in remembrance, how can the saints lift up

their heads and rejoice in that day? how can they be other than ashamed before the Lord, at his coming? Our conclusion, therefore, is this, that the account then to be rendered, will be confined to the occupation of the several talents, with which each individual has been intrusted, and the judgment will be one of gracious reward. A reference to Luke xix. 12 tends to confirm this conclusion, and St. Paul's doctrine as conveyed in 1 Cor. xv. 41, appears to me to confirm it. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." As there is a diversity in the measure of glory in the sun and in the moon, and amongst the countless multitude of stars which occupy the heavens around us, so there shall be among the saints in the kingdom of our Father; and, though every saint "shall shine forth as the sun" in that kingdom, because every saint shall be a reflection of the glory of Christ (Matt. xvii. 2), yet a larger share shall be awarded to some than to others in that day; as "one star differeth from another star in glory." Thus, we have obtained a reply to the several inquiries, which we proposed to make, and, as I humbly trust, consistent with scripture truth. It now remains for us to endeavour to bring the doctrine closer to

ourselves, and may the Holy Ghost make it a blessing unto all!

The lesson which I would inculcate from the doctrine delivered, is this. That *the nearness of that event should quicken us in preparing to stand before the Son of man.*

The nearness of that event may be gathered from our position on the stream of time, and our bearing on the prophetic landmarks which the Scriptures describe upon its banks. That wondrous stream which God brought "out of his treasures" (Jer. x. 13, Psalm cxxxv. 7) in the beginning: which, flowing from beneath the eternal throne (Isaiah lxvi. 1), has been rolling onward in its mystic course for six thousand years, bearing upon its bosom every generation of men: which came forth at the first clear as crystal, and smooth as the brow of Jesus, but how soon to become turbid and defiled by the sin of man; and as the restless flood (Isaiah lvii. 20) moved on, it has gathered the accumulated sin of every generation, and so it will gather, until it have run its course, and be disgorged again into eternity!

What now is our position upon this stream, in respect to *time*?

It may be drawn, I believe, with no small accuracy from the words of inspiration, upon which I forbear to enter,\* but from which this

\* See note, p. 34.



truth becomes self-apparent, that “the day of the Lord is at hand.” And this all-important fact gathers strength from that other particular of which we speak, *our bearing on the prophetic landmarks on its banks.*

Of all those sure signs, with which the Word of God abounds, which mark the winding up of our present dispensation, I believe, two only remain.\* The one, *The restoration of Judah, in an unconverted state, to the city and the land of his fathers*; the other, *The sign of the Son of man in heaven.* With respect to the first, it is an unavoidable deduction from Zechariah’s prophecy; that as, when the Lord shall appear for their deliverance from their last trouble, he shall find them in their own land, they shall then be converted unto him, by looking upon him in that day; into that land and into that city they must have gone, in a condition of national unbelief. (Zech. xii. 1—14, xiv. 1—4.) In their return, therefore, to Judea and Jerusalem, I look as the next event which has yet to take place, believing, as I must, that the other buds of the parabolic fig-tree have unfolded; and that these two alone remain to be developed.† And, if this event *may* be very near, “What manner of persons ought

\* See “Bloomsbury Sermons, 1843.” P. 74.

† The coming of Elijah the prophet, may be considered as one of the buds of the parabolic fig-tree, and if so, there



we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" And should this event prove actually to be so, shall we then think, if now we give good heed to it, that we shall have been preparing too soon or too earnestly to stand before the Son of man? And if the minister of the Lord believe in his conscience that it is so, what should be the reply which he should give, from the watchtowers of our Zion on which he stands, to every one that asketh, "Watchman, what of the night?" surely this; "The morning cometh," to the saints of God; "and also the night," of sorrow to a heedless and ungodly world. Why! the very streaks of light, the harbingers of early dawn, are now beginning to break over the mountain tops, and to tell us that "the day-spring from on high

are three signs instead of two remaining. I mean not to controvert this idea, much less to raise a question about a fact so plainly revealed in Sacred Scripture. A reference to the "Restitution of All Things," page 147—151, will show that I have earnestly contended for this faith. That Elijah, the prophet, shall personally appear among the seed of Abraham about that time, is clear from the Scripture, for it must be before the day of wrath. (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) But as there appears to be no preparation amongst the restored of Judah, before the Lord's appearing, as we gather from Zech. xii. and xiv., which seems to be the object of Elijah's advent, I cannot but conclude that his ministry is designed for the dispersion, and especially of the kingdom of Israel, amongst whom he ministered, as a prophet, in the days of his flesh.

is at hand," and that the day of the Lord must shortly dawn. And what a condition of blessedness, for the saints of God will it introduce! *Now* they may be blessed abundantly through the undeserved mercy of our God; but *now* their cup is mixed, *then* an unmingled cup of blessedness is their portion for evermore. No more sorrow, no more sighing, no more pain, no more sin, for the former things shall have passed away. *Then*, like Moses on the top of Pisgah, they may look back upon the way by which they have gone in the waste howling wilderness behind them, and forward, to what a scene! Before them is the unfolding vista of eternal ages, with the long distance sinking far away in the glory which shall then be revealed. How many, may I ask, of this congregation are preparing for this event?

O God! who alone can turn the heart, turn the hearts of this people, as the heart of one man, to thee. Prepare them for thine appearing, and thy kingdom. Yea, so fix their best desires now upon thee, that in the day when thou shalt come, every one who is here present may be found amongst thy people, joining in one Hallelujah, and lifting up their voice in one common song, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation!"

## LECTURE III.

PERSONAL HOLINESS, A PLEDGE OF GLORY  
AT THE APPEARING OF CHRIST.

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BY THE REV. E. HOARE, A.M.,  
CURATE OF RICHMOND.

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EPHESIANS I. 13, 14.

*“ In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,  
“ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

THE Church of Christ is always described as a waiting Church, and the people of God a waiting people. From the first hour of the fall, they have been waiting for the day, when the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; in their daily walk of faith they are waiting on the Lord for grace; and from the time of the ascension they have been waiting for the glorious coming of

their King. Thus, *patient expectation* forms one of the grand elements of Christian character. In every thing he does the believer is expecting God: in prayer he expects his blessing; in the study of the Word he expects his wisdom; in the sacraments he expects his presence; in his warfare against sin he expects a triumph through the victory of his Lord.

But it behoves us to be careful that this expectation rests on a well-grounded hope. If to us the day of the Lord will prove darkness and not light, it is vain for us to long for it; if we cannot have boldness even in the day of judgment, it is suicide to pray that the King of kings will hasten his appearing. Let us, then, carefully examine what is the pledge and evidence of our being welcomed as sharers in his kingdom. In this inquiry our text may furnish us with a guide, being written to assure the Ephesians of their own interest in the blessed inheritance of the saints of God. In ver. 10, the apostle had unfolded the grand purpose of redemption: "That God might gather together in one all things in Christ." In ver. 11, he declares his own possession of the promised gift: "In whom also *we* have obtained an inheritance." And in 13, 14, he assures them that *they* also were sharers in the coming glory, for they too had believed, and having believed, were sealed by

God's Spirit as a pledge and earnest of their safety.

“In whom *ye* also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

The words then will teach us :

I. That God has a purchased people upon earth.

II. That this people are waiting for glory at the coming of the Lord.

III. That during the period of their waiting they are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

IV. That this seal is the earnest or pledge of their inheritance.

I. First, then, we learn that God has his purchased people upon earth.

The Church is here described as his “purchased possession,” just as it is said, Acts xx. 28, to have been “purchased with his own blood;” words which describe in both passages an interest of the closest and most endearing character. There are in common life two separate acts in every purchase: the payment of the price, and the fetching home the purchased property. Of these the former was finished in the atonement; the latter

is in the constant process of completion through the ingathering of God's chosen children. This distinction explains the limitation of the act of purchase, in our text, to his elect people. Of the atonement we are told that it was universal; that "he made by the one oblation of himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the *whole* world." "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) When the Son of God said, "It is finished," the price was paid for *all*; and the commission went forth to offer unto *all* the free promise of pardon and salvation through his blood. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thanks be to God we know no limit to the free invitation of our King; no barrier to the abundant flow of living water! Most freely, most unreservedly, most fearlessly, can we proclaim to every sinner under heaven, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, return unto me for I have redeemed thee." Are there present then any anxious inquirers after life? Any who see the glory of the kingdom, but yet fear that it is not for them? Take home, dear brethren, the assurance that he died for all; for

*you*, though you deserved it not ; yes, even for *you*, who have so often, so grievously, sinned against his law ; *your* sins were laid on him, and believing on him you shall be free and safe for ever.

At the same time there is plainly a limit in the fetching home of a purchased people : “ Many are called, but few chosen ;” and although the stream of living waters has been deep, and broad, and clear, and though the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness has been sufficient, amply sufficient, for the washing off the sins of the whole of this most sinful world, yet the green pastures that have been watered by it have been so few and narrow, that in some ages they are scarcely traceable in history. The people of God have always been a little flock. Now of this little flock our text is speaking, under the title of “ the purchased possession.” The word in the original (*περιποίησις*) expresses, “ that which God has made his own.” It is the same word used by the Septuagint for Jacob’s cattle, Genesis xxxi. 18, “ The goods which he had gotten, and the cattle of his getting.” It goes, therefore, far beyond the first act of atonement, and conveys the idea of appropriation. It expresses the fulfilment of the prayer, “ So fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock ;” and refers to the application of the blood of Jesus through the effectual call of the



Holy Spirit. He hath made them emphatically his own. His own children adopted into his family ; his own servants “ translated into his kingdom ;” his own, for they are “ his peculiar treasure ;” his own, for they are “ formed for himself that they should shew forth his praise ;” his own, for he dwelleth in the midst of them, and will never leave them, having declared, “ They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels.”

II. Now the joys of Christ’s coming are limited exclusively to this purchased people. When Christ saith, Behold, I come quickly ; they only can reply, “ Even so come, Lord Jesus.” Accordingly this glorious event is described as *their redemption* : “ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” We are led then to the second great truth to be gathered from our text, viz. :—

That this purchased people are waiting for glory at the coming of their Lord.

That the day of redemption refers to this triumphant period is evident, from the fact that when it arrives the earnest will be no longer needed, but the inheritance itself enjoyed in full possession by the heirs of God. It is “ the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” mentioned by St. Peter ; “ the redemption that

draweth nigh," predicted by our Lord himself; "the adoption or the redemption of the body," "for which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Romans viii. 22.)

Now as we found a twofold meaning for the word "purchased," so shall we also find a twofold meaning for the word "redemption." In some passages it expresses the deliverance of the soul from the curse of sin, through the most precious blood of God's dear Son; in which case it is described as a past and finished act, because the child of God is already pardoned, having his name written in the Lamb's book of life. Thus, ver. 7, "In whom *we have* redemption through his blood, and forgiveness of sins." But in other places, as for example, in our text, it is described as altogether future. We are now sealed "until the redemption:" in which passages it refers to the final victory of the Son of man, the final ingathering of his people. And most justly is this coming salvation called redemption, for then—

(1.) The purchased possession will be set free from the power of corruption within the heart. In every child of God there is a new life, even now implanted; a new will already given by the Holy Spirit; but yet how hard is the struggle against indwelling sin! How sluggishly do the affections rise and fix themselves upon the things of God!

How rapidly and how powerfully do they entwine themselves around the things of earth! How many tears of deep contrition are shed, and must be shed by the child of God, when he gazes in faith on the cross of Christ, beholding his agony and his love, and then turns to the cold, lifeless, powerless devotion of his own ransomed spirit! There seems little more light or heat produced than when the sunbeam is reflected from the cold damp rock. But *then* there shall be no more power left to clog the spirit in its flight to God; indwelling sin will be clean rooted out for ever; the world will have no more power to tempt and hinder us in our union with Christ than had the hosts of Egypt to fix the chain of bondage upon Israel, when Moses looked back upon their lifeless carcasses and scattered chariot wheels, and cried, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." No! there will be no difficulty *then* in communion with Jesus; no effort needed to realize his love or feast the soul in the enjoyment of his presence, "for then we shall see him face to face." And further still, there will be no temptation to dishonour him; we need approach him with no tears, no shame, no deep humiliation, no fear, no misgiving, for sight produceth likeness, and however little we can fathom the depth of coming

glory, of this one thing we are persuaded, that “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

(2.) But there are yet further reasons why this day should be called the day of redemption.

Of the whole purchased possession only a small portion groan under the burden of indwelling sin. By far the greater number are already perfectly free from it. The whole long series of believers who have successively fought the fight of faith and finished their course, already “rest from their labours;” and, therefore, from that hardest of all labours, the struggle against sin. Now, the purchased possession includes both living and departed saints, and the day of redemption is to them as well as to us a blessing. All the scattered fragments of decayed manhood, the ashes of the martyrs, the lost bodies of the drowned, and the countless victims of decay, will all be redeemed from the power that has decayed them, and be re-united in the living bodies of the saints who form the bride over whom the Saviour rejoiceth as the bridegroom. “They are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.” Then sin and death will together lose their sway; sin over the soul, and death over the body. There shall be no mourning of the widow, no aching in the mother’s heart, no sinking of the frame under disease, “no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither

shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.”

III. In the great day, therefore, the work of redemption will be complete in the purchased possession. It is plain, therefore, that our hope of coming glory depends wholly upon our being numbered amongst this happy company. The work of Christ is the redemption of the purchased possession. Those, therefore, who form no part of that possession, can have no share in the redemption. But here arises the question, is there any test by which the purchased possession are distinguished from the world ? The text answers it by teaching us that there is *the seal of the Spirit*.

We have already shewn by the context, that St. Paul appeals to this seal as an evidence that the believers at Ephesus were received to a share of Christ's inheritance. This, then, let us carefully examine.

The object of a seal is to denote property ; and here we may trace the connexion between the seal and purchased possession. He hath sealed those whom he hath made his own. They are in the world, but yet not of the world ; moving amongst other men, engaged in similar pursuits, subject to the same laws, concerned in kindred interests, but yet they are no more one with them than the gold is one with the rough ore in which

it lies imbedded; and could we see as God seeth, we should perceive on each heart the stamp of the Holy Spirit separating them as God's property, sealing them as God's people.

The great agent in impressing this seal is plainly the Holy Ghost, here called the Holy Spirit of Promise, fulfilling the eternal counsels of the Father, as Eph. iv. 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom ye are sealed;" and, 2 Cor. i. 22, "God who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Upon the exact nature of the seal there has been some little difference of opinion. Some have referred it to the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism; some to that in confirmation; while others have confined it to the secret voice of God in the heart, described by the apostle when he says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." As there is no such limitation stated in the passage, we had rather take the wider sense, and refer it to the whole stamp of God upon the soul of the believer. That this is the true meaning may be gathered also from the connexion between that and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. The charge just quoted from Eph. iv. 30, stands imbedded in a practical exhortation to purity and love.

So again, the words, 2 Tim. ii. 19, "Never-



theless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," implies a direct connexion between the seal and the holiness of the adopted family of God.

Now on the seal there are three things often to be observed: a name, a moral, and a likeness. In the seal of the Spirit all these may be discovered.

There is the *name of God*, as Rev. xiv. 1, the 144,000 had "the Father's name written on their foreheads." They are, therefore, no strangers to him. They know his name as they know his voice; and having that name sealed on them by the Holy Spirit, they can boldly and freely and confidently cry, Abba, Father!

There is moreover the *law of God*.

Where the Holy Spirit dwells he always stamps God's law. There is no such thing as grace without holiness; no real work of the Holy Spirit where there is no moulding of the heart after his will. Thus the promise of the Saviour is, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33.) Here we have the exact idea of our text. There is the purchased possession, "They shall be my people;" and the



seal of the Spirit, the law of God engraven on the heart by God himself. Thus the law is not merely set before the Christian, it is wrought into him. The wax changes its form under the seal, the likeness on the seal becomes the likeness on the wax, and there is a oneness wrought between them; so here, a new mind is given, a new form created, a oneness of will with God produced. His will is our will; his mind is our mind; his law our delight, our joy, our desire. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

There is, moreover, a *likeness* in this seal; the likeness of none other than the Son of God.

In every branch there is a certain likeness of nature with the vine; in every child a certain likeness to the parent; in every limb a certain oneness with the whole body; and on every member of Christ's Church there is the likeness of the Lord, more or less, visibly stamped by the Spirit. As before, the Holy Ghost is the great sealing agent; and he carries on his work by the reflection of Christ's image in the heart. We have already remarked, that sight produced likeness. Now the believer sees Christ and knows him; darkly, it is true, and by faith only; but yet he knows him, and in the light of his countenance rejoices. And what is the effect of this? That his own heart is moulded by the Holy Ghost

into the image of his Lord ; that there is a gradual process of assimilation ; that if we may follow out the image of the seal, the love beheld in Christ softens the heart, and then the Holy Ghost stamps his likeness upon the softened spirit. “ But we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Such, then, is the image of the seal ; the name of God, the law of God, and the likeness of the Son of God. With this are all God’s children set apart and sealed as his own. Men of the world see it not, but it is there. Indeed, they cannot see it ; for if they know not the name, how should they read it in the saints ? If they know not the Saviour, how should they recognise his likeness ? “ The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” But the *saints of God*, they perceive it. It forms a holy badge of union amongst the whole company of the redeemed. By it they recognise each other, as each is recognised by God ; and however scattered as to habit, and place, and circumstance, at once acknowledge that there is “ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” The *destroying angel*, too, he perceives it, like the blood upon the door-post, and dare not touch the servant of the Lord ; so he passeth by, seeing that

he is sealed as a jewel for the crown of God: "Hurt not the world, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God on their foreheads." While, on the other hand, the *ministering spirits*, in their rapid flight through heaven, they perceive it, and know thereby that there is a child of the kingdom, whose path they are to tend carefully through life, and whose ransomed spirit they are to bear joyfully to the throne of their Lord. Above all, *the Father* knows it. He knows it, for he hath set it there. He knows each sealed member of his purchased Church; he knows their wants, their temptations, their joys, their cares; he knows them to be his own, and he keeps them as his own; for "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

IV. Nor is the seal altogether unknown to the individual thus sealed by the Spirit. To him it is the pledge of glory at the appearing of Christ.

This property of the seal is described by our text, when it teaches us, that the Holy Spirit "is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

From these words we learn that while the saints are set apart as the purchased possession of their

God, they are themselves made heirs of a glorious inheritance in their Saviour: Christ is their inheritance, and they are his. We observe, also, that during their waiting period, the seal of the Spirit is the earnest of their possession. The word "earnest" (*ἀρράβων*) is used to express something given beforehand as a pledge to ratify a covenant. In Gen. xxxviii. 18, we read that Judah gave his bracelet as a pledge that he would hereafter send a kid. And so, when part of the price is paid as an acknowledgement of the debt and pledge that the rest should follow, or when part of the purchased property is carried home, in token that the whole is secured unto the purchaser, that part payment is the earnest of the whole possession. The fact, therefore, that an earnest is given to the children of God, implies that there is an inheritance secured to them by covenant, and that this inheritance is already theirs; though the time is not yet come in which they may take possession. They are like the heir of an estate in the days of his minority, who is under guardians for a while, but can still say, "the estate is mine." So the Church is in her minority until the day of her redemption, but the inheritance is no less her's. It is made her's by the covenant of God; and she holds the earnest and the title deeds. Thus St. Paul writes, ver. 11,

“In whom we *have obtained* an inheritance.” Compare these words with our text. In the one, the people of God are *waiting* for their inheritance until the day of redemption; in the other, they *have even now obtained* it (ἐκκληρώθημεν). The one speaks of the possession, the other of the covenanted title. Let none think, then, that it is presumption for the child of God to cry, Abba, Father! without questioning the acceptance of his prayer. It may be presumption for us to suppose that all is safe because we understand the doctrines of the Gospel; presumption if our intellect alone be caught, or our fancy charmed, by the glorious pictures of prophetic truth; presumption if we lean only on a sacramental union with the visible body of the professing Church; presumption if our plea be our sincerity and natural effort after holiness: in all these cases it is indeed presumption to rejoice in the thought that we are the sons of God. But if there has been a thorough breaking down of the old man; a deep conviction that our whole hope is in Christ, and Christ alone; if the Holy Spirit hath so dwelt in the heart as to put God’s seal on it, to make sin altogether loathsome, Christ altogether lovely, Christ’s glory our joy, and Christ’s likeness our heart’s first desire, then it is no presumption to believe that we are his. It is only to trust his faithfulness;

it is only to believe that he has not given his seal in vain, but will complete his covenant with his purchased people, when we rejoice in his Spirit as our pledge, and with the hearty song of hope and praise, welcome the advent of our Redeemer, saying, "Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the earth, and the people with equity."

The work of the Holy Ghost, therefore, is the pledge of glory at the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

But possibly there may be some persons who are disposed to say, "Oh! that I could have such a pledge of my own safety in Christ Jesus!" Then you are doubtful as to your own acceptance; fearful lest his coming should be to you a day of darkness and not light? What can be the cause of this?

And it may be that there is *some darling sin admitted*; some dear idol still preferred to God. If in the wax there be one unsoftened part, the whole impression will be destroyed; and if there be one point of reserve in your Christian dedication, one idol not yet surrendered, you cannot look for the seal of God to assure you that you are altogether his. He sealeth no heart that is not



wholly given to him ; the Holy Spirit dwells in no idol temple ; and though there be accuracy in the faith, and even much that is lovely in the character, yet if sin be admitted, and lust encouraged, most assuredly will the words be verified, “ There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

But the want of peace may arise from *mistaken views of the true character of Christian holiness*. Many look for perfection when they should be expecting only progress ; they expect the crown in the very midst of their struggle against sin. But we must not doubt the earnest because it hath not all the joys of the inheritance ; we must never say there is no work begun, because sad experience convinces us that the work is not yet complete. The holiness of the servant of God consists not so much in sinlessness, as in an earnest, constant striving against sin. When, therefore, your heart is humbled to the dust through the deep conviction of your guilt ; when there is such contrition that you are ready to cry, “ Woe is me, for I am sinful ! ” when Christ becomes altogether precious, your only hope, your only stay, your only trust ; when your heart is so drawn towards him, that though you venture not to *think* you love him, you can still rejoice in the thought of his appearing ; then you have your pledge,—you may believe, you may trust on, and wrestle on ; and though the



work seem only in its infancy, you may yet cling to your pledge, and be “confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.”

But it is possible that the want of peace in the expectation of the Lord may arise from another source, viz., *a forgetfulness of the relative position of faith and holiness*. If holiness is to come first, and acceptance second, it is impossible there should be peace; no effort can remove the sense of separation from God. But the words of our text teach us plainly that acceptance must be first, and the sealing of the Spirit second: “In whom also *after* that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” We would most earnestly entreat those dear brethren, who can detect in themselves no pledge of glory at the coming of their Lord, to observe the order of these important words. You doubt whether you are one of the purchased possession. You have done nothing to deserve the gift. Then believe without deserving; as a poor, guilty, sin-stricken sinner, lay your whole burden on the Lamb; and as one deserving wrath, entreat of Him to write your name in the book of life. Then you will find a holy peace flow through your soul; instead of fear there will be a calm resting upon Jesus; and instead of anxiety, and doubt, and misgiving, at the thought of his

appearing, you will be able, in the confident spirit of childlike love to pray with the apostle, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

But there are probably some dear brethren present who, in the midst of their weakness, are still conscious of such a change within the heart that they reverently venture to believe it is nothing less than the seal of God. Oh! what a thought! Numbered amongst the purchased possession! Sealed by the Holy Ghost! Waiting for the day of redemption with God's pledge already given, so that it is impossible they should be disappointed of their hope! It is too great a thought for utterance; too vast a blessing for man to attempt to scan its vastness. Oh! ye sealed servants of the living God! what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness? How holy, how heavenly, how spiritual, how blameless, how unworldly, how unselfish, how unutterably thankful to him who hath saved you by his grace! Ye are sealed "to the praise of his glory;" ye have the name of God on your foreheads, dishonour it not. Ye are clad in white raiment, soil it not. Ye are sealed by the Holy Ghost, grieve him not by your unhallowed will. No! purchased people! press onwards rather as the followers of the Lamb, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before,

press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus." A little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. A little while, and "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet" for ever. A little while, and there will be a sudden stop to this world's engagements. The lightnings will shine from one end of heaven to the other. The voice of the archangel will startle men that they may be ready for the trump of God, when it thrills through the silence of the deepest tomb. The man of business will quit the desk; the thoughtless man of pleasure will turn pale and tremble; the man of lust will almost begin to pray. There will be men hurrying to and fro; all eyes turned towards the heavens; the timid quaking for fear; the hardened cursing God; when in the midst the clouds will open, and the Saviour shall come forth with love beaming in his countenance towards his sealed ones. He will recognise them, and they will recognise him. He will still any tendency to rising fear by gently saying, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father;" and the whole purchased possession shall be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord."

Oh! that with yonder sacred throng  
We at his feet may fall;  
There join the everlasting song,  
And crown him Lord of all.

## LECTURE IV.

THE WASHING OF REGENERATION COMPLETED  
AND CROWNED IN THE REGENERATION OF  
GLORY.

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MATTHEW XIX. 28.

*“ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

THIS promise of our blessed Lord to his own apostles is one of deep and perpetual interest to the whole Church of God. It is opened by that solemn preface which our Saviour employs in his most weighty sayings, or those which are the hardest for our faith to receive. So it is also in the present verse. The promise is mysterious and

wonderful in itself, and it is foreign from the general views and hopes of Christians. It stands out, with an air of contrast, from most of the other promises; and seems to discover to us a world of unknown and mysterious blessings in the kingdom of God.

But these words illustrate the past no less than the future. How different will the whole course of the world's history appear, when we read it by the light, the pure and holy light, reflected from this one promise! Here we behold the sure issue of all the changes of time. The triumphs of ambition, the policy of statesmen, the victories of a Cæsar or a Napoleon, are only paving the way, as unconscious pioneers, for the fulfilment of these words of Christ. Here is the sublime and wonderful close to all the dreams of that Infidel philosophy, which would regenerate the world without a Saviour and without God. They will all be lost and forgotten in this regeneration of glory, when the apostles shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Our present subject, however, leads us to dwell chiefly on the title which the Saviour has given, in these words, to his future kingdom. He describes it by one short and emphatic term, the regeneration. The word occurs only in one other place of the New Testament. It is where

St. Paul, addressing the beloved Titus, gives that glowing summary of the Gospel, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus iii. 4, 5, 6.)

Now the use of the word in these two passages only, of itself conveys a most instructive lesson. We are thus reminded how close is the connexion between the present renewal of the Christian, and the future redemption of the world. The same word is set apart by the Holy Spirit to describe both of these events. The true Church are the first fruits of God's creatures, and the first fruits are a sure pledge of the harvest that will follow. The grace of Christ, in every regenerate soul, is an effectual earnest of that future glory. The inward renewal of the heart, in this life, can alone secure us a place in that regeneration to come. The one is the seed, the other is the unfolded blossom. The one is a spring and fountain of life in the soul of the believer, the other is that ocean of joy and blessedness into which it must eternally flow.

The great purpose of the Gospel is to restore



the lost image of God to the soul of man. Hence no part of Divine truth is more important than that which unfolds the nature and distinctive signs of this vital change. The ruin or salvation of innumerable souls may depend on their views of this doctrine, on their embracing the truth, or contenting themselves with a falsehood. And yet no doctrine unhappily has been more involved in doubt and controversy. The simple outlines of Divine truth have been clouded by verbal disputes, or assailed by most fatal errors. The nature of a change of heart, always mysterious in itself, has been rendered more obscure by viewing it mainly in connexion with outward means of grace, and the unconsciousness of childhood, rather than in the manifest fruits of sin or righteousness, and in the future glory of the resurrection. And thus words designed to encourage the faith and animate the hopes of God's people, may be perverted so as to blind the eyes of worldly Christians, and to harden their hearts against the clearest evidence of their own unrenewed and unholy character in the sight of God.

Now in these words we have a key to remove the obscurity, or at least to render it harmless, and to guide our thoughts into a safer and clearer path. The Holy Spirit has used the term regeneration twice only, and each time in a different



sense. The Church has therefore a Divine warrant for using it herself with some latitude of meaning. As the ark of Noah, that type of our redemption, was built with lower, second, and third stories; so may it be with this term, expressive of the same deliverance. In its first and lowest sense it may apply to the whole visible and baptized Church. In a further and stricter sense it may express the great and vital change in the inward experience of the true believer only. But there is another and still higher meaning taught us by these words of the Saviour, in which it denotes the coming resurrection and the eternal glory of the people of God. And yet these meanings may have so much in common—like the stories of the ark, though distinct, they may be so closely united—that one and the same term may not unfitly be used to describe them. Privileges common to all the baptized, by a mysterious and secret change, pass into quickening and special grace; while grace ever contains hidden and concealed in its bosom the seeds of glory.

But besides this lesson, which perhaps is implied in our text, there is another truth which is taught us still more plainly. These two passages, compared together, shew us the aspect in which regeneration must be viewed, if we would understand its true nature, or rise to a just view of its incon-

ceivable worth. We must fix our thoughts, not on the cradle of infancy, but on the brightness of the resurrection. We must not lose ourselves in the mist of verbal disputes, but place ourselves in thought before the judgment seat of the Lord. Instead of seeking to define what God has nowhere revealed to us, how, and when, and in what measure his Spirit is pleased to work in the unconscious bosom of a child, the word of God here invites us to a plainer duty. It bids us trace regeneration, first as it now reveals itself in the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed abundantly through Christ on the true servants of God, and manifested in all the fruits of the Spirit; and then to follow its course, when, like Aaron's rod, it blossoms into eternal fruit in the day of the resurrection. Thus, following where the Scriptures lead us, we may avoid the rocks and shoals on which many have made shipwreck, and enter safely on a broad ocean of Divine truth.

Such, then, is the clear teaching of the Holy Spirit, when he would instruct the Church in the true meaning and nature of regeneration. He points us, not backward to the unknown time of His own secret working, but either inward, to the actual fruits of righteousness in the renewed believer, or onward to that regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.

Let us pray for the guidance of this blessed Spirit, while we consider from these words, first, the nature of spiritual regeneration, or renewal of heart; next, its present imperfection; and then, lastly, its final completion in the kingdom of God.

I. First, let us inquire what is the true nature of this vital change, as revealed in God's holy Word. It matters little whether the word regeneration, or conversion, or renovation, or each in turn, be used to describe it; the great question is the reality and necessity of the change itself. There is a work, deep in the soul of man, where-with a stranger does not intermeddle, and on which salvation depends. The judgment seat will reveal the momentous contrast, but it is already begun in the secret chambers of the heart. He who is thus "born of God" "overcometh the world," and "shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life."

Line upon line, and precept upon precept, are given us in the word of God, to explain the nature and the importance of this great transition. Our Lord himself declares its absolute necessity for salvation in the most impressive terms. "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." How deep and comprehensive the nature of the change, is declared to us by St. Paul, with equal

plainness, in his words to the Corinthians. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) In another place he unfolds to us the total contrast between a natural and a regenerate state. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 6, 8, 14.) The immediate instrument of this renewal is announced by St. James in his Epistle. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.) St. Peter again exhibits the natural and constant effect of this renewal, in the love of the brethren, with its own enduring and imperishable nature. "See that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 22, 23.) The beloved disciple reveals to us another of its sure marks in victory over worldly temptation. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." He also affirms, even more clearly than St. Peter, the lasting character of this change. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin,

because he is born of God.” (1 John iii. 9 ; v. 4.) And thus the privileges of this inward renewal are set before us, like pearls on a thread of gold, from the first emotions of repentance and faith in the heart, till the redeemed shall enter with triumph into their promised inheritance.

This renewal of the heart, at all times and in all ages, is needful for salvation. “Ye must be born again.” It is no mere positive ordinance of the Gospel, but an universal law of Divine holiness. It has its root deep in the very nature of the Fall. Man is not merely under a sentence of guilt ; his understanding is blinded, his will and affections are all perverse and corrupt. He is without true holiness of heart, and therefore cannot endure the presence of the Most Holy One. No patchwork of reluctant duties, no power of truth on the surface of the conscience, will suffice for his recovery. The heart has become stone, and it must be turned to flesh. The will has received a deep taint at the very core, and the remedy must be as deep and vital as the disease. The bitter root of ungodliness must be plucked out, and a new life of love be implanted in the soul. For true holiness consists not in separate acts, or variable convictions ; it must be a perpetual fountain within. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth

good fruit." The change, therefore, must be in the will itself, heart-deep and vital; a living power, and a Divine nature, engrafted in the soul by the Spirit of God.

The effects of such a renewal will correspond with its own character. It cannot long remain hidden, but, our Lord himself being witness, will reveal itself by its fruits. The inward desires and thoughts of the heart will now be changed. The affections will be turned heavenward. The mind will be drawn unto high and heavenly things. Sin will be hated; holiness will be coveted and pursued. The will of God will be set up as the supreme rule, and the glory of God be made the supreme end. To hallow His name and advance His kingdom will now appear the only objects worthy the aim of an immortal spirit. Then will follow the whole train of Christian graces, and, above all, the love of Christ and the love of the brethren. To such a regenerate soul these holy affections will be the very breath of its life, the deepest and most natural instinct of its being.

The titles given to this inward change in the word of God are no less descriptive of its greatness. It is a new birth, and a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is the gift of a new heart, the heart of stone being first taken away. It is nothing less than to be born of God, and born of the



Spirit. He who experiences it is the partaker of a Divine nature. Renewed faculties and a permanent life of holiness are thus implanted within his bosom. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And the fruits of this Divine life, how blessed and beautiful they are! It is love in the heart, and light in the understanding, and a heavenly mind in the affections of the soul; joy and peace, goodness and faith, meekness and temperance. These are the streams from the new fountain of life, which the Holy Spirit now opens in the heart of the believer.

The names applied to the regenerate themselves are not less significant of the total contrast. Once they were unrighteous, but now they are righteous before God. Once they were unbelievers and ungodly, now they are called, and chosen, and faithful, the saints of the Most High. They are no longer children of wrath, as others; but have become the true and spiritual children of the Lord God Almighty.

But the real greatness of this change will be seen most clearly by the future separation in the day of Christ. That difference must surely be deep and vital, on which the issues of eternal life, and eternal death, are made to depend. There must be a moral contrast between the regenerate and the unregenerate, wide as between light and darkness;

else the righteous Judge would assuredly never pronounce an eternal separation between them. There must be a great gulf, even in this life, between the heart that is renewed in God's image, and the sinner who is still in his ungodliness ; or never could such a gulf have been seen fixed between Dives and Lazarus in the life to come.

This inward renewal of heart is connected with means and helps, whereby the Holy Spirit is pleased often to work in the soul ; and with glorious results that will flow from it hereafter at the coming of the Saviour.

The outward means of this renewal are often set before us ; they are many and various. The one most frequently revealed to us is the word of God. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you by the Gospel." "Ye are born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of God." "I will never forget thy precepts ; for with them hast thou quickened me." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "I know that his commandment is life everlasting." Or to sum the whole in one short sentence of our Lord—"The seed is the word of God."

But besides the Divine word, other means are set before us as concurring to the same end. Thus we are told that "baptism doth now save us," and

that we are saved by the washing or laver of regeneration. (1 Pet. iii. 21 ; Tit. iii. 5.) Thus prayer is commanded us in connexion with the same gift. "A new heart will I give unto you, and a right spirit will I put within you. Yet for this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37.) So also trials and afflictions, the intercessions of the faithful, and the labours of the ministers of Christ, are all means for this same blessed end, the renewal of the spirit in true holiness after the image of God.

But this connexion, however frequent, is not invariable. No means of grace can, by their mere presence only, ensure this unspeakable blessing. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The Holy Spirit, in this His great and peculiar work, acts as a sovereign. Because He is infinitely gracious, He will ever manifest that it is of grace, and not of debt, when He bestows His benefits. To imagine that the inward renewal follows of course upon outward ordinances, is to turn them into idols, and provokes God to shut the windows of heaven against us. The privileges of baptism are indeed great, in every case, but they do not and cannot imply, in every case, this renewal of heart; even if the same terms were sometimes used to describe them. There was an Apostle Judas, we do well to remember, who fell by transgression, and went

to his own place. There was also an Apostle Judas, his name and title the same, but his character far different, who was the brother of the Lord, sanctified in God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus.

The same truth will apply to every other means also. The seed of God's word often falls upon stony ground, and appears to be given in vain. The efficacy of prayer is great; yet the children of Israel sought after God, and perished in the wilderness. (Ps. lxxviii. 34.) Simon Magus was baptized, and remained still in the bonds of iniquity. (Acts viii. 13, 23.) Every means in its turn may fail, or all means combined, if we trust merely to the outward ministration. They are then idols, which God will utterly abolish, that our confidence may be in His sovereign grace, and in that alone.

But there is another connexion, more close and intimate, between the renewal of the heart in this life, and the regeneration of glory in the kingdom of God. This does not vary like the former, but is sure and unchangeable. Its links are the promises of the new and everlasting covenant. He who begins the good work of grace in the heart, will perform it until the day of Christ. (Phil. i. 6.) His sheep shall never perish, and no man shall pluck them out of his hand. (John x. 28.) He

may lead his people through a furnace of fire, or through floods of deep water, but his promise remains immoveable and steadfast—"I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." "The Lord loveth judgment; he forsaketh not his saints; but they are preserved for ever." (Heb. xiii. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 28.) The connexion, it is true, between the outward means of grace, and its living reception within, may be suspended or broken. But "neither height nor depth nor any other creature" shall sever the believer from Christ, or separate grace in the heart from the full regeneration of glory.

II. But however excellent the fruits, even now, of this inward change of heart, in the present life they remain very imperfect. The proofs of this meet us on every side. And indeed it is this fact which adds such a deep interest to promises like that of the text. When we compare the present weakness of grace with its final triumph, we are lost in wonder at the immense contrast. We learn to adore the love and wisdom of the Saviour, who out of the mouth of babes and sucklings can ordain such miraculous strength, and cherishes the feeblest spark of holiness into a flame as bright as it is everlasting.

This present imperfection of spiritual regeneration is proved by the doubts and controversies themselves, to which it has given rise. Had the

contrast been as deep and conspicuous as it will appear in the judgment day, these doubts could never have arisen. If every true Christian were full of holiness, and perfect in love, who could deny the reality of the inward change, or ascribe the same character to the unconverted and ungodly sinner? No, in this case, the question, who are regenerate indeed, would have its answer written as by a sunbeam from heaven. It would then be like a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, to confound what he had severed, to deny the work of His grace where it was so clearly manifest, or to ascribe the same to baptized unbelievers. But the actual state of the Church is very different. Natural conscience will often rise into a beautiful semblance of Divine grace; and real holiness has its features dimmed and its brightness grievously impaired, by infirmity and corruption; and hence there is a double source of delusion and fatal error.

The cause of this imperfection is, first of all, the remaining power of sin, even in real Christians. The enemy is dethroned, but not expelled. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) There is thus a struggle and conflict in the soul; and the free acting of Divine



grace is restrained and hindered. There is a mixture of corrupt tempers and unholy desires, which may sometimes cloud, even from the view of the Christian himself, the secret work of God's Spirit. What wonder, then, that his brethren should doubt, or the world deny, the reality of the blessed change within him, when even his own faith is ready to fail, and his own spirit has to walk in darkness?

But this imperfection of grace, to the eye of the world, is greatly increased by the falls and temptations of the believer. Spiritual grace, though its source be infinite, is limited in its own strength, and may be overcome, in particular acts, by a superior power. Now the corruptions of the heart, favoured and quickened by special temptations, do often exert such a power over it. The secret life of holiness is then crushed and buried for a time, though never destroyed. It is driven to the stronghold for refuge; till, by contrition and prayer, it derives strength from Him who is the fountain of strength, and rises up anew, in the power of Christ, conquering and to conquer. Thus David fell into adultery and murder. But the life of grace, though pent up with sin, mourned in secret anguish, and his bones consumed away with his daily complaining; till the words of Nathan gave depth and power to his contrition,

and, in the tenderest of the Psalms, he poured forth anew the melodies and tears of a regenerate heart.

Now these falls of true believers obscure greatly, from the eyes of the world, the real contrast between a renewed and an unregenerate state. There are thousands who never were spiritually born of God, who bear no one mark of inward renewal to holiness; and yet who never fell into open adultery, like David, or like him, committed murder; or, like Peter, denied Christ himself with an oath. The most opposite states thus appear confounded; and none but a spiritual eye can discern the immense gulf of separation which lies between them. He only, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, can discern grace in its feeblest efforts, from the highest and proudest attainments of the unrenewed conscience, and from the fairest shows of merely human virtue,—tainted as such virtue will ever be with the foul curse of a secret ungodliness.

There are other causes which tend to the same effect, and conceal, in the present life, the power and excellence of inward regeneration. Grace is now only in its infant weakness. It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds when it is sown in the earth. It is scarcely visible at first, except to the eye of God himself—

who sees the end from the beginning, and whose wisdom can trace the seeds of one autumn into all the fruitful harvests of a thousand generations. The Apostle wrote to the Corinthians "as unto babes in Christ." And how many faculties and powers of perfect manhood are concealed during the first hours of infant weakness! The new affections of the heart, in like manner, reveal themselves by slow degrees; and never will their beauty be fully manifest, till they appear, in their ripeness and maturity, in the kingdom of God.

Another cause of this present obscurity is the secret and hidden character of true religion. The coarser passions of the heart reveal themselves at once. But it is not so with the operations of Divine grace. These are more tender and delicate in their growth. They will not bear to be exposed too soon or too rudely to the eye of man. They are precious seed, which has need for a time to be buried under ground. The Psalmist has well described the natural instinct of a godly sorrow, in those simple words—"I pour out my soul by myself." The mourning also of Israel, in the days to come, will be in solitude and silence—"every family apart, and their wives apart." The deepest emotions will often, because of their depth, shrink from the view even of the dearest friends. So is it also with the precious fruits of the Spirit. They seem

in this life to delight most in the shade, as if they were reserving their full beauty for the sunshine of heaven. Hence true believers are called the secret or hidden ones of God ; and the Church is compared to a dove that makes her dwelling in the clefts of the rock, and in secret places. Thus, by various figures, we are taught that the experience of the renewed heart is a hidden and delicate thing ; and that the choicest fruits of grace are those which the world cannot see, and which are now visible unto God alone.

Again, beside this instinct of retirement in the spiritual life, there is a blighting atmosphere which surrounds it. The chilling selfishness of the world meets it on every side, to drive it into the shade. How should the renewed spirit expand itself freely in the midst of sin and ungodliness ? When feelings of contrite sorrow or holy joy come forth from their hiding-place, what response would they meet with, in such a world, but cold contempt, or heartless mockery ? Like Noah's dove, they must return, weary and disconsolate, to shelter themselves once more in the retirement of the heart. And thus the regenerate life, imperfect in itself, appears to be still more imperfect, because the fruits of grace that are most lovely and beautiful refuse to discover themselves to an unbelieving world.

The real contrast, then, between the regenerate and the unregenerate in heart, is at present greatly obscured; and the hypocrite or the worldly can deceive themselves more readily by a mere form of godliness. Out of this obscurity dangerous counterfeits of inward regeneration arise, as the locusts, in the Apocalypse, from the smoke of the pit. The fact of baptism, and the general privileges of the Church visible, may be thus confounded with the special and holy prerogative of being renewed in the spirit of our mind, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. To this another and more dangerous counterfeit succeeds. Natural morality is made a substitute for Christian grace. The amiable temper, or the strict sense of worldly honour, which may exist apart from the love or fear of God, are then mistaken for the fruits of the Spirit. Such persons may seem, like the scribe in the Gospel, to be not far from the kingdom of God. But then it may be all the harder, for this very reason, to convince them that any great change is still needed, or that the warning of the Saviour can possibly still apply to them—"Ye must be born again." They forget that a corpse may be adorned with the most lovely flowers, and still the breath of life may be entirely wanting; and that, with all their outward morality, attractive as it is before men, they may be entirely destitute of living holiness in the sight of God.

The danger of this self-deception is greatly increased, when, besides a Christian name and baptism, and outward morality, there is a form of sound doctrine, and some real emotion of interest in spiritual things. Such were they, in the parable, who received the seed into stony ground. They received the word, we are told, with joy; but they had no root in themselves, and so endured but for a time. They had some right views of the saving doctrine; some deep emotions were awakened in them by the powers of the world to come; but all was transient, a wave only, passing over the surface of the heart. The Word was never engrafted so as to become like a living and immortal seed within them. It is to such characters, with their transitory emotions, and fickle and shifting impressions, that the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Hosea, has addressed that tender warning: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? for thy goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away!"

Such are the counterfeits of a true renewal of heart, arising from its imperfect nature and the obscurity in which it is concealed. And how may we be preserved most effectually from these delusions? How shall we best discern the true nature and real excellence of this great change amidst all the infirmities and darkness by which it is now



obscured? These words of our blessed Lord suggest the true answer, and lead us to consider, lastly, the full regeneration in the kingdom of God.

III. And here let us examine, in the first place, the meaning of the promise itself, and the time when it is to be fulfilled. When shall the apostles sit upon these thrones of judgment? The answer is easy, if we consult the earlier prophecies of God's word. There is a time of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken, as St. Peter himself assures us, by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world begun. The earth will then be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The voice will then be addressed to Zion: "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." All nations, we are told, shall then be gathered to the throne of the Lord, to Jerusalem, and shall walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart. (Jer. iii. 17.) Then, also, the promise will be fulfilled, that Israel shall blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Is. xxvii. 6.) In that hour of redemption, the words of Zechariah will be accomplished: "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; there shall be one Lord, and his name shall

be one." (Zech. xiv. 5, 9.) Then, at the destruction of the last enemies of the Church, the joyful tidings will go forth: "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever." (Is. xxxii.; Dan. vii.) And as Israel will then be foremost in honour among the redeemed nations, so will the holy apostles be foremost in honour among the risen saints of God. All shall be kings and priests, but the highest rank in that royal priesthood shall be theirs. They will be the princes who are nearest to the King of heaven. And thus the promise of the Saviour in these words will be found in harmony with the whole economy of that glorious kingdom. The first resurrection will usher in a dispensation of righteous judgment and holy dominion; the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, who shall reign for ever. Then the Son of man will visibly sit upon the throne of glory; and the apostles, according to His promise, will share in His exaltation; they shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of redeemed Israel.

Such is the clear meaning of this holy prophecy. But why does our Lord use the word, regeneration, to describe this future inheritance? Why, but to teach us that the hope of His kingdom is

inseparably linked with the most spiritual doctrines of the Gospel? The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is mysterious in itself; but it becomes still more obscure if we trace it only in the oblivion of childhood, or even amid the darkness of the present world. To understand, therefore, the true nature of regeneration, our Lord himself here bids us look forward to the life to come. His Advent will reflect a clear light even on those truths which in themselves are the most secret and mysterious. The work of grace will then be visible, not in its feeble germ, where the eye is soon deceived, but revealed in immortal strength, and expanded in eternal beauty. The immeasurable difference will be seen, in that hour, between the counterfeits of holiness and the living reality; and every delusion, however specious, will be swept away, in the light which will then stream from the presence of the Lord.

This kingdom of Christ is truly called "the regeneration," as it respects the person of each believer. Every child of God will then be completely renewed in his understanding and his will; in his body itself, and in all the faculties of the soul. Our Lord, who was the only begotten Son from all eternity, is said to have been begotten anew in the resurrection from the dead. (Acts xiii. 33.) And so, also, the true believer is even now

regenerate in heart; and yet the change in the day of the resurrection will be so glorious, that he may then be truly said to be regenerated anew.

The understanding will then be fully renewed. Now, even in the holiest saints, its redemption is incomplete. A wonderful change, indeed, has passed over them. Once they were darkness, and now they are light in the Lord. They have received a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and their eyes are opened to behold the wondrous things of His law. But how much blindness still remains! How dim, very often, are their apprehensions of Divine truth! Even among real Christians, what divisions and strifes arising from their mutual errors! What a cloud seems to cover us when we would fix our minds upon eternal things! How soon we stumble amidst the deeper mysteries of God's Word, and too often even at its plainest doctrines! Like the blind man of Bethsaida, we see men, as trees, walking; or say with the doubting Nicodemus, when heavenly truths are proposed to us, How can these things be?

But when the Lord shall appear, the understanding of his servants will be completely redeemed. They will no longer grope among shadows; the true light will have dawned on their souls. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then,

face to face : now we know in part ; but then shall we know even as we are known." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

How glorious, even in this aspect only, will be the coming regeneration ! The soul, renewed in the image of Christ, will be filled with Divine wisdom. No errors will divide, no doubts perplex, no controversies harass, the people of God. The mysteries of Providence, now so inscrutable, will then be revealed to them. The doctrines of grace will have every cloud that now obscures them rolled away, and will shine forth with a heavenly lustre. The glory of God in all things will be seen manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. The depth of His love, the perfection of His obedience, the virtue of His sacrifice, will employ their noblest faculties in delighted meditation. They will then see, without a veil, the power of His intercession, the wisdom of His Providence, and the glory of His everlasting kingdom. With every sense awake, with every faculty redeemed, they will gaze for ever on Him who is infinite in goodness, and will know even as they are known. O how blessed, how unspeakably blessed, will be this light of the renewed understanding, in that "regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory !"

But the heart and its affections will also have an equal share in this coming regeneration. Now,

even in the sincere believer, too many traces of their natural corruption remain. Vain thoughts and evil imaginations distract his holiest services. His prayers are often heartless, and his praises more heartless still. Every act of worship or obedience bears sad and mournful testimony of a secret enemy within. To use the forcible words of an old writer, "The soul that commands obedience doth itself resist it. In the same mind the wisdom of the flesh, which is sensual and devilish, fighteth against the wisdom of the Spirit, which is meek and peaceable. In the same will there is a delight in the law of God, and yet a contrary bias to the law of sin. In the same heart, singleness and sincerity, and yet much secret fraud and prevarication. In the same affections, love of God, and love of the world, fear of God, and fear of men, trust in God and doubting of his favour."

When our Lord, however, shall sit on the throne of his glory, these corruptions, like the shadows of night, will flee away and disappear. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) When St. Peter denied his Master, one look from the Saviour had power to melt his soul into an agony of tears and contrition. And surely the same look of love, in the day of the resurrection, will waken into lively exercise every holy affection of the regenerate heart. There will



be no dulness or weariness, no vain thoughts or wandering desires in that heavenly worship, but one full and perpetual tide of love, and joy, and peace, and blessedness. Those affections which shrank from the blighting influence of the world will there reveal themselves freely in the presence of the Saviour. Then will be seen and felt, in all its power, the meaning of that address to the Church in the prospect of her coming glory: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." (Cant. iv. 12—16.) What a depth of holy affections, what various graces of the Spirit, in hearts renewed after the image of Christ, do these emblems imply; which shall all of them be fully and eternally realized in the blessed hour of that coming regeneration!

But not only the heart and the understanding will thus be completely renewed; the body also will be redeemed and made glorious. And thus

the regeneration of the believer will be complete. The tabernacle will correspond with the holiness of the immortal spirit dwelling therein; and the last taint of the fall be for ever done away. Each faculty will appear more glorious by the glory which will be reflected from all the rest. The whole spirit, and soul, and body, regenerate and redeemed, will be presented faultless before the throne, and become an habitation of God himself through all eternity.

This future regeneration will be seen further in the happiness and union of the whole Church of God. The dross will then have been purged away. Every hypocrite will have been separated from their holy company. There will not only be perfection in each separate heart, but full and perfect union in the whole body of Christ. Every Christian will have been prepared by infinite Wisdom, like the stones in the temple of Solomon, for the place he will occupy for ever in that harmonious fellowship. No strife will disturb, and no coldness will deaden, the happy intercourse of their regenerate souls. One tide of Divine life will circulate through the whole body; and the fulness of love in each heart will freely unfold itself, when it sees its own happiness reflected in every eye, and its own deep emotions echoed back in praise and gladness from every spirit. There

will then also be the recognition of parted friends, communing on all the past scenes of their earthly pilgrimage, and meditating, with unspeakable joy, on the grace and providence of their Saviour. In one word, Christ will be all, and in all. What a contrast between the Church, in its present weakness, profaned by formality, rent with divisions, and beset with its own corruptions; and the Church as it will then appear, one holy and regenerate body, where every thought is led captive to the obedience of Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost has consecrated the whole, as a living temple, to the glory of God and of the Lamb for ever and ever!

This regenerate blessedness of the Church, again, will receive a further increase from the nature of the world to come in which it will be revealed. There will be a new creation, answering to the new life of holiness in the saints of the resurrection. The works of God will be redeemed from the curse; and thus will supply the regenerate soul with a large field, where its faculties may range freely, as in their natural home.

In the first creation, the earth had been stored with all its various riches before man was formed to enjoy them. Light had been already called into being, and had coloured every landscape with beauty. The firmament had been established

above, and lands and seas had been separated below. Every tree that was good for food, or pleasant to the eyes, had appeared from the bosom of the earth. The lights of heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars, had their courses appointed. The sea, the air, and the earth, had received their tenants, and were peopled with innumerable varieties of animated life. Then, at length, man was created, with senses and faculties in harmony with the world around him. His ear could drink in its melodious sounds; his eye could enjoy its rich and varied landscapes; and his heart could exult with deep sympathy in every form of life and of gladness, of which creation was already full. From the moment when the breath of life was breathed into his nostrils, and he became a living soul, the harmony of his faculties with the world that was spread around him, proved him at once to have been designed from the first as its possessor and its lord.

So will it be hereafter in this new creation of God. There will be a redeemed world, suited to all the faculties of the regenerate soul. The creation itself will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." He that sitteth upon the throne, will say, "Behold, I make all things new." The light of Divine goodness will then be shed, with a purity

and brightness now inconceivable, over all the works of God. The spiritual affections will no longer be driven into retirement to escape the blight and pollution of the fallen world that is around them. On the contrary, they will be drawn out into the liveliest exercise by every object on which they rest. The goodness of the Lord will be reflected clearly, and without a veil, from every work of His hands ; and all creation be one glorious mirror to image forth and multiply the vision of His glory. Then, too, will be seen the full meaning of that statement concerning our blessed Lord and Saviour : “ He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” How little can we conceive, in our present darkness, the holy delight that will fill the Church of God, when their eyes shall rest upon a ransomed universe ; when every creature shall invite them to a new song of praise ; and though voiceless itself, shall borrow their lips to utter its own separate anthem, saying, “ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever !”

Such appear to be some of the main elements in this coming regeneration. The heart, the understanding, the soul and the body, of each believer, will be perfectly renewed. The whole Church, freed from danger without and corruption within, will form one united body, faultless and complete

in the presence of its Lord. The world itself, the visible creation, will be renewed also, and form a theatre of pure and holy delight to all the people of God. All these various blessings are comprehended in that one short sentence: "the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory."

And now, finally, let us observe the connexion between present renewal of heart, and a share in this future inheritance. The same word, regeneration, includes both the seed of grace, and the harvest of glory. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." It is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, now begun in our souls, which alone can be a sure earnest and foretaste of the fuller regeneration that is to come.

This truth appears from the promise to the apostles themselves. They had been followers of Christ in his temptations. Here was the mark of the regenerate life within them; for it is only those that receive the seal of God's Spirit on their forehead, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Such was the character of the apostles; and because of this character, they received from our Lord his gracious promise—"Ye which have followed me, shall, in the regeneration, sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel." Their following in the steps



of Christ was the mark of a present renewal, and an assurance of their part in the regeneration still to come. They had drunk already, and would soon have to drink more deeply, the Saviour's cup of suffering; they were baptized into his sorrows, and made conformable to his death. Foremost in labours and afflictions, they would hereafter be foremost also in dignity and honour. Their faithful zeal would expose them, above others, to Jewish persecution and the hatred of their own countrymen. And as their sufferings, so would be also their reward. In the world to come, when Israel should be a righteous nation, they were to receive a glorious prerogative. When the King of Israel shall reign in righteousness, they also, as princes, shall rule in judgment. Their special honour will grow out of the seed of their own peculiar sufferings; and they who in their lifetime were a mark for the scorn and murderous hatred of the Jews, "shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Now the same truth which is taught by this promise to the apostles applies equally to the whole Church of God. They who are renewed by the Spirit, so as to follow in the steps of Christ—these, and no others, shall partake of that glorious regeneration. Nay, even the nature of the harvest they will reap hereafter will depend

on the course of the regenerate life here below. The same variety which appears in the natural works of God will be equally manifest in the new creation. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And since there is the utmost diversity here in the acts of the regenerate life, in the gifts, the graces, and the excellences of Christ's servants, then we may be assured that, as the seeds are various, so also will be the harvest when the Lord is revealed.

And what a deep interest does this thought infuse into all present things, when we see them linked by an immutable promise with the coming glory! The world, seen thus with the eye of faith, has been for six thousand years a stupendous nursery and seed-bed for eternity. Every prayer of faith, now offered in weakness and sorrow, will yield a harvest of joy in that coming regeneration. Each holy desire, now secretly cherished in the soul, will issue in streams of righteousness that will make glad the city of God. The silent meditation, the secret prayer, the tear of contrition, the song of praise, and the sacrifices of self-denying love, poor; weak, and imperfect as they are here below, shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Each varied form of truth or wisdom, of love or holiness, in the soul of the Christian, the fruit of his new

creation in Christ Jesus, will leave its own sacred stamp on the immortal spirit, and determine his peculiar place and portion in the kingdom of his Lord. He who died for us on the cross, under this very title—"the Lamb that was slain"—will receive "power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The apostles, who suffered from the unbelieving Jews, shall hereafter judge the tribes of Israel. So will it be also with every believer. His prayers and labours and sacrifices here on earth, the fruits of spiritual regeneration, are the seed from which the future harvest will arise. His hopes, it is true, are founded solely on the blood and the righteousness of his Incarnate Saviour. The inheritance for which he is looking far surpasses all that his holiest services could claim; for they can claim nothing except on the ground of God's free promise. But though the distance be immeasurable between the service and the reward, the connexion, and even the proportion, is firm and sure. "Light is sown for the righteous." The light of grace is the seed; the fruit that will arise from it is the light of everlasting joy in the kingdom of God. Blessed are they who sow bountifully; for they shall, without doubt, reap also bountifully when the Lord shall appear.

And now, my brethren, in closing, let us apply

the whole subject in two short lessons. First, let us ask ourselves, are we now renewed and regenerate in heart? Let us not be content with names or privileges, however holy; but let us search our own conscience as in the sight of God. Have we such a regeneration as will be found linked and united with that full regeneration in the great day? Let nothing short of this great change satisfy or content us. The love of Christ, the grace of the Spirit in the heart, nothing less than this will avail for our salvation. O that each one of us may have those Divine marks of spiritual renovation: "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Finally, let us look, my brethren, on all our present services in the light of the coming regeneration. There is a secret connexion between them which can never be broken. Let our faith rest firmly upon this blessed truth. Look on your fellow Christians as those who shall be your immortal companions in "the regeneration, when the Son of man sitteth on the throne of his glory." Offer your prayers unto God, in secret retirement, or in the house of prayer, as knowing that your desires are all registered in heaven, and will be the seed of an eternal harvest. Labour in the cause of Christ, devote yourselves to his service, as those

who believe and are sure that even a cup of cold water, given in love to his name, shall in no wise lose its reward. Learn by this one word, regeneration, to link the present with the future. Remember that the great Husbandman of the Church is even now, every day and every hour, sowing the seeds of eternal life in the hearts of His people; and in the day when He will shortly appear, He will manifest the triumphs of his secret grace in their souls, and “they shall be called, the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,” that He may be glorified in them, and they may be blessed in Him for ever.

## LECTURE V.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AN ASSURANCE AND  
PLEDGE OF THE LORD'S RETURN.

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ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 29.

*“ But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of  
this fruit of the vine, until that day when I  
drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.”*

HE who knows what is in man, and is intimately acquainted with the wants and infirmities of the human heart, addresses himself to man in a manner most suited to his constitution and circumstances. In His works of Creation, he sets forth His Wisdom, Power, and Glory. In His Providence (especially as connected with His Church), He manifests His Goodness, Severity, and Truth. In His Word, He sets before us His promises, and teaches us, not merely by precept, which is cold and distant,



but by example, which is near and encouraging. Nor is this all; for, besides the Word we have the Sacraments, which are extensively applied to our senses. The sight, the touch, the taste, are here interested; and thus the Believer, holding in his hands these divinely appointed signs, has transmitted to his heart by faith, a most full and comfortable assurance of the power and presence of his God. Rejoice, O believer, in the tender care and consideration of thy Lord thus abounding towards thee. Mark how he encourages thy faith and keeps alive thy hope. See and acknowledge all his goodness; and now, while thy heart longs for his presence, let us meditate together, how in His Word just read we possess an ASSURANCE AND PLEDGE OF HIS RETURN.

Our first object in discoursing from the text, will be to give its proper and literal meaning. There may be several ways of understanding a passage of Scripture, and each sense may be useful. But Scripture is not indefinite, nor, like the ancient oracles, ambiguous. It has always one primary and special meaning. A Scripture may point to two objects of a similar character; as, for instance, to the Babylon of the Old and of the New Testament; but, it does not point *equally* to both. It may be difficult to say what the primary meaning of a particular Scripture is; but still a primary meaning it has.

Nor are we justified if we do not labour to ascertain that meaning. Here "every Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven" is manifest. We may not make anything we please Scripture, and so handle the Word of God unadvisedly, after our own imaginations; but where no contradiction is implied, taking that Word in its literal and grammatical sense, we are bound to give it in its most plain and obvious meaning. Thus, there will be a consistency in expounding the Word of God; Scripture will be understood as it expresses itself. A Gentile will mean a Gentile; Israel will mean Israel; and Judah will mean Judah. Unless the context manifests the necessity of a figure, we shall not go for far-fetched interpretations; we shall allow Scripture to speak as any other book, and believe that God intends what He says in its most obvious meaning.

May He now in His compassionate kindness look upon us. May He give us the illumination of His Holy Spirit to conduct us to the truth of Scripture, and by the bright beams of divine light, not only illuminate our understandings, but sanctify and comfort our hearts.

I. In expounding our text we shall first reject unsatisfactory interpretations, and so endeavour to establish what we believe to be its true meaning.

1. The first inadmissible explanation of the text

is, that our Lord fulfilled his implied promise of drinking the fruit of the vine, when, after his resurrection, and previous to his ascension, His disciples "did eat and drink with Him."\* In St. Luke's Gospel it is recorded that "He ate a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb."† And before, in the same chapter, in the narration of the journey to Emmaus, it is implied that He ate.‡ The same thing is also intimated after He showed Himself to his disciples on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, as recorded in the last chapter of St. John's Gospel. Thus, in the Gospels, it is once asserted and twice implied, that the Lord *ate* with His disciples. In the Acts it is declared as above quoted, that the Lord also *drank* with them; or, more correctly, they with Him. But,

(a.) No where is it said that he drank wine; whilst, from the circumstances of those with whom he sat down, it is probable that water was the beverage. Be this, however, as it may, there is no scriptural proof that our Lord previous to his ascension drank wine with his disciples.

(b.) But further, he tells them, in the text, that He would drink it "new" with them. The term, "new," can only, we apprehend, be understood in two senses; one, as referring to the *fluid itself*,

\* Acts x. 41. † Luke xxiv. 42, 43. ‡ Luke xxiv. 30.

when just fresh from the grape ; the other to some *new manner* in which it was to be used, or applied. Now, that our Lord did not use the term in the former sense is evident ; for it not being the season of vintage, there was no must, or new wine, flowing from the presses, which He with His disciples could drink. Whilst, as to the second sense of the epithet, namely, its referring to some new use or application of wine, His after drinking it (if He did drink wine) with His disciples in their ordinary meal, was nothing new or different to the manner in which it was then used by Him.

(c.) There is yet one other expression which further militates against the interpretation of the text which we are combating ; namely, the phrase, “ my Father’s Kingdom ; ” “ Until that day, when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” Assuming that the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, my Father’s Kingdom, and the Kingdom of the Son of Man, are the same ; assuming that that Kingdom, commencing with the preaching of John the Baptist, will continue through the Millennium till Satan is cast into the lake of fire ; I say, assuming this, in what sense different to that in which He then drank wine, could our Lord be understood as implying that He would drink it during his subsequent sojourn of forty days on earth ? Were the disciples during that period “ in the Father’s

Kingdom," in any sense different to that in which they were then in it, whilst sitting at meat in that upper chamber? The Holy Ghost was not given till after the Lord's ascension, so that in that respect there was to them no change of condition. The Kingdom of Heaven was already among them, and in them. They themselves had for some time been engaged in preaching that Kingdom. Therefore, they could not be said to be in the "Kingdom of the Father" during those forty days, in any sense in which they were not when these words were spoken, and in which, previous to our Lord's promise, they had not for some time been.

Wherefore, from the absence of all proof in the Sacred Narrative, as to the fact of our Lord having, after his resurrection, drank wine; from the circumstance (in the event of his having drank it) that there is no sense in which He could have drank it "new," during that period, with his disciples; and, lastly, from their being, throughout the same period, in no other sense "in the Kingdom of God," than that in which they then were; from these particulars we infer, that the interpretation of the text, which would refer it to the fact of our Lord's having drank wine with his Disciples during their ordinary repast whilst on earth after his resurrection, is inadmissible.

2. We next examine that interpretation which would make the words of our Lord relate to a change of the Jewish Passover to the Christian Supper.

The reply to this will briefly be, that it cannot be proved that our Lord refers to the Passover. He is not speaking of the Lamb, which in itself is called the Passover, but of bread, which He took "whilst they were eating," i. e., whilst they were at the repast; and of wine, namely, "the cup after supper."

St. Luke is the most express in his detail; from which it appears that our Lord first ate the Passover with his disciples, and drank of the first Passover cup (it is supposed three or four were used on this occasion), saying, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves;" that, then, instituting the Supper, He took bread, or the loaf, saying, "This is my body, this do in remembrance of me;" and, lastly, "the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood." Such is the account given by St. Luke, with which the other Evangelists agree. But, allowing that our Lord did intend his words to refer to some continuance of the Passover in the Lord's Supper, what then? Did He ever eat that bread, or drink that fruit of the vine, in a sacramental manner with his Disciples? And this brings us to con-



sider another interpretation of the words often given, viz.,

3. That they have received their accomplishment in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. To meet this, we reply, there are but two ways in which this could take place. One, *literally*, from our Lord having partaken the Supper with his Disciples before his ascension; the other, *figuratively*, as being now present with his people in that Divine repast. The former explanation, however, will not stand from the fact alluded to above, namely, that there is no evidence that our Lord, except in an ordinary and common manner, ever ate and drank with his Disciples after his resurrection.

It cannot then be said that our Lord fulfilled his declaration literally, during the forty days of his resurrection state on earth.

Let us now examine if the words have received a figurative accomplishment by his invisible presence with His people at the Eucharist. The untenableness of this position may be thus shewn:—

(a.) In no figurative sense does our Lord eat bread or drink wine in that ordinance. He is present, but, not a partaker, for He it is on whom his people feed.

(b.) Further, to suppose that such were the case,

would be to make our Lord partake of his own sacrament.

(c.) Again, this explanation would overthrow the nature of a Sacrament, which is "an outward sign of an inward grace," of which Christ can have no need.

(d.) And, further, this interpretation would make Christ eat and drink his own body and blood; a thing most extravagant, and which the Church of Rome involves in the figment of Transubstantiation.

(e.) There is yet one other reason why that drinking wine cannot point to the Lord's Supper; in other words, cannot point to a thing which itself was. The Lord says, "Until the day when I drink it *new* with you." Now, it was a new way in which He was then drinking it with them, for He was instituting a new rite in his Church. Supposing then, for the sake of argument, that the Lord subsequently partook of the Supper with his Apostles, and is now spiritually sharing it with His believing people; in either case, there is nothing "*new*" in this use of the wine,—nothing different to the manner in which he was then using it.

Thus, we have disposed of three of the interpretations alluded to.

Let us now turn to that which we believe to be the only true exposition of the passage.

It is this :—

4. That the words of our Lord WILL RECEIVE THEIR EXCLUSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT IN A STATE OF THE CHURCH NOT YET MANIFESTED.

That the Lord's Supper has a reference to the Lord's Advent we are assured from the words of the Holy Ghost, by Paul: "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."\* And that this is the sense in which we are to understand our text, we shall endeavour to prove from its exact agreement with what is elsewhere in Scripture revealed of a future state.

We shew this in the following particulars :—

(a.) The Phrase, "drinking wine," which is equivalent to feasting, agrees with the manner in which the future felicity of the Saints is elsewhere represented. For example: "At Supper time, the King came in to see the guests." And again, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom." Such, also, was the popular idea, as expressed by "a certain Scribe," a man in whom one cannot but feel an interest: "Blessed," he exclaimed, "is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of Heaven."

\* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

(b.) The Persons with whom the Lord says he will drink wine, also agrees with a future interpretation. These are his Apostles, Judas being now gone out. Thus, to the happy future none but the holy shall be admitted: "There shall in nowise enter into the City anything that defileth."

(c.) The State alluded to, no less than the Persons, also, well refers to the future. This state is "The Father's Kingdom." Now, it is clear, that though this kingdom has from the days of John the Baptist been partially manifested, yet it has not yet fully come, and will not, till the "Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;"\* then, the Nobleman gone into a far country will return, and then, in a full and complete sense, shall the declaration be fulfilled: "I will drink it new with you, in my Father's Kingdom."†<sup>1</sup>

\* Rev. xi. 15.

† The population of the world being, as is supposed, about 800,000,000: of these about 600,000,000 are Pagans and Mahometans, and of the rest, professedly Christian, in Europe only about 50,000,000 it is computed are Protestant. "In France, it has been stated, that out of 32,000,000 of its inhabitants, 25,000,000 have never seen the outside of a Bible; and, that in Spain, out of a population of 10,000,000: 9,000,000 and three-fourths have never seen any part of the Word of God in their own tongue."\* Truly, "the Kingdom," after a lapse of near 2,000 years, is not yet come! <sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 12.

\* Bickersteth's *Promised Glory*.

(*d.*) The Period alluded to in the expression, "that day," calls also our attention to a time yet future. It appears very like the phrase so commonly used, especially by Isaiah and Zechariah, with a view of designating a period yet to be disclosed. Nor, if we are right in giving the term this meaning, is this the only time it is used in the New Testament. Our Lord himself thus applies it to his second coming, "Of *that day* and hour knoweth no man."\* And again, "It shall be more tolerable in *that day* for Sodom than for that City."† So, St. Paul, also, "That thing which I have committed unto Him, against *that day*."‡ And again, "that he may find mercy in *that day*."§ And again, "A crown of glory which the Lord shall give me at *that day*."|| So, also, in the Book of Revelation, "*That great day* of God Almighty."¶ In each of these cases the context fixes the sense to the second coming of Christ, which is, we contend, when it stands by itself, the emphatic and proper meaning of the phrase. In this sense, Zechariah, in the conclusion of his prophecies in the three last chapters, which refer to events yet future, uses the term, emphatically, about

\* Matt. xxiv. 36.

† Luke x. 12, compared with 14.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 12.

§ 2 Tim. i. 18.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 8.

¶ Rev. xvi. 14.

twelve times.\* So, also, do other prophets, as Joel,† and Amos,‡ and especially, Isaiah, in one prophecy§ repeats the expression six times, as referring to the future destinies of his people.

When, therefore, we find our Lord himself applying, as above, the term in question to the future; when the Apostles use the same phraseology in speaking of the second Advent; when, I say, we thus find in the New Testament the language of the Prophets adopted to point to events, to which, in the same language, they direct our attention, we may infer, that our Lord, in using the expression, "that day," had in view the same period to which Prophets, Apostles, and He himself, elsewhere, by the same phrase, had directed the minds of the faithful.

(e.) There is yet one other point in the phraseology of the text, which goes to establish the interpretation contended for. It is the Expression "new." "Till I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

\* Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened," &c., is no valid objection to this interpretation. The fountain has been, and is, effectually opened to the *election* both of Jew and Gentile; but "in that day," namely, when these things come to pass, it shall effectually purge, not merely an election, but David's family and Jerusalem's inhabitants.

† Joel iii. 18.      ‡ Amos ix. 11.      § Is. xxiv. to xxvii.



Now, observe how exactly this agrees with the language of the Prophets, both of the Old and New Testament, when they bring before us the felicities of a future age. In the xcviith and xcviith Psalms, which, with those before and after the ancient Jews referred (and from their internal evidence, rightly referred) to the times of Messiah, the Psalmist exclaims, "Sing unto the Lord a *new* song."\* In Isaiah it is written, "I create *new* heavens and a *new* earth."† In Ezekiel, "the trees which grow beside the river which proceeds from the Sanctuary bring forth *new* fruit."‡ In Joel, it is predicted, "in that day, the mountains shall drop down *new* wine."§ And Amos also, "The mountains shall drop sweet, or *new* wine."|| In the prophetic language of the New Testament, the term is also thus introduced:—"We, according to his promise, look for a *new* heavens and a *new* earth;"¶ and in the Revelation of St. John, "They sing a *new* song;" and, "I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth,"—And, "I John saw the holy City, the *new* Jerusalem;"—And, "Behold, I make all things *new*." Additional light is also thrown upon our text by "the Regeneration"

\* So also Psalm cxlix. Each of these are Psalms of Judgment, and so refer to the future.

† Is. lxxv. 17.

‡ Ez. xlvii. 12.

§ Joel iii. 18.

|| Amos ix. 13.

¶ 2 Peter iii. 13.

of which our Lord speaks, and by that "Restitution of all things," noticed by St. Peter.\*

There is, then, from the agreement of this part also of the phraseology of the text with the prophetic language of Scripture, an additional argument that our Lord, in using the expression, "*new*," meant to call the attention of his disciples to a state of the Church yet to be revealed.

Wherefore, in regard to the only four interpretations of the text which have been ever given, from the whole of this part of our subject, we conclude that—Since the words of our Lord have received their fulfilment Neither in the period between his resurrection and ascension, Nor in any change of the Passover into the Lord's Supper, Nor in the Lord's Supper itself—Moreover, since the interpretation of the text, as relating only to the future, fully agrees with each particular mentioned by our Lord, both as to its Festive Nature, Persons, State, Period, and Newness—this, and this only, we conclude to be the true and sufficient explanation of the passage, and as such we trust that it is established.†

II. Having thus, it is hoped, cleared away difficulties we shall be in a condition in which we

\* As to whether the term drinking wine may be taken literally, see Note A.

† Acts iii. 21.

could not otherwise have been, to show how the Lord's Supper is "an ASSURANCE and PLEDGE of our Lord's Return."

1. This view of the subject, as far as its being an ASSURANCE of the second Advent is concerned, is closely connected with the interpretation above given of our text, on which account we have been the more careful in its examination.

The passage, however, above quoted, from the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians—"As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come,"\* fully confirms this view of the Eucharist. It is because there were difficulties connected with our text, that, in preference, it was selected. The Scriptures do not speak frequently of the Lord's Supper, but the contrary.† In the two places, however, where it is doctrinally noticed, viz., in the Institution of the Ordinance in the Gospel, and in the Reformation of the same in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in both these places the subject is connected with the Second Advent. There is a threefold view which the

\* Chapter xi.

† It is remarkable that, but for the abuses existing in the Church at Corinth, no mention, it appears, would have been made of the Eucharist in the Epistles. This is significant. But how little has the proportion of apostolic teaching been observed in the professing Church universal in an undue exaltation of this sacrament!

Scriptures give of this Ordinance. For the Past, it is a Commemoration; for the Present, a Communion; for the Future, an Assurance and Pledge.\* That it is an ASSURANCE of the Second Advent, the exposition of our text, as above given, as well as the words of St. Paul have, we trust, proved. We shall not, therefore, enlarge on that point; but now—

2d. Show that the Lord's Supper is, further, a PLEDGE of the Lord's Return.

Its great suitability in this respect will be seen in the following particulars:—

(a.) In its Nature. The Lord's Supper is a Feast. And what a Festival will that be, when all the Sons of God are united at their Father's table! A Feast also implies several particulars. For example—

It is Social. The Eucharist is not a solitude, but a Communion. There the Children of the Kingdom meet together. So in the Future. The New Jerusalem is a City, a Community. There will be no isolation, no monasticism, no hermits there. All will be social, and warm, and glowing with fervent love and sweetest intercourse amongst the Saints,

“In solemn troops and sweet societies

That sing, and singing in their glory move.”†

\* See a tract by the Writer, entitled the “Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.” Seeley.

† Lycidas.

Security is also implied by a Feast. And how entire the security of the glorified Church, when in the immediate presence of her King, He shall finally, and for ever, have bruised Satan under her feet!

Yet once more. Repose follows on security. In that eternal festival, when the full triumphs of redemption shall be disclosed and applied, what tongue can tell the depth of that tranquillity, the profoundness of that repose which shall be then enjoyed! Believer, is thy way now wearisome, and thy heart sad? Do doubts and fears harass and distress thy soul? Be encouraged. These all shall have with thee a speedy and a happy end. An undisturbed repose awaits thee, an abiding rest. In every perplexity and trial, set it fully before thee, and remember, "there remaineth a rest for the people of God."

(b.) Look, in the next place, at the Provisions set before us in the Eucharist, and see how suitable a Pledge are they of a returning Saviour. Bread and Wine are the institution of our Lord. How lively are these Pledges! Taking them in his hands, the Believer may exclaim, "Here do I see and possess a sure earnest of future joy. I see, I touch, I taste. Not only have I the word of promise, but in great condescension my Saviour has submitted to my senses, the foretaste of joys unseen." With lively emotion, the Christian receives

these divinely-appointed tokens. In them, by faith, he feeds on an absent Saviour, and his soul enjoys an antepast of the future. There is nothing in those elements distasteful. There will be nothing in those joys which they represent to cause alloy. On the contrary, as this earthly repast is ever delightful both to body and soul, so unfading pleasures, at the Lord's return, await in her glorified humanity the risen and raptured Church. As this earthly repast satisfies, so shall the heavenly banquet afford a deep and full sufficiency. And, as these sacred elements, by their innate power, exhilarate the natural man, and, by faith, delight the spiritual, so, in the Antitype, shall there be both to body and soul joys unfading, and pleasures which shall not know decay.

(c.) In the Continuance of this Divine institution, we see again, how suitable a Pledge it becomes to Believers of the certainty of the Lord's return. Has this Christian festival, during the vicissitudes and persecutions of nearly two thousand years, fulfilled the appointment of its Founder? Has his Word in it been established; and are Believers thereby, yet "shewing the Lord's death until He come?" Then, surely, his Word in other respects shall receive its accomplishment. Then, surely, He will come, as He has promised, and His people "shall drink new wine with Him in His Father's



Kingdom." They "shall eat and drink with Him at his table, in his Kingdom;" "Everlasting joy shall crown their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."\* His word is sure. His ordinances, whether of creation, or of grace, are established. "He hath given them a law which shall not be broken." And the Believer receiving into his body, and there safely hiding these precious tokens of the redemption of his soul, waits with confidence for the redemption of his body, and sees in them most sure and certain Pledges of his Lord's return.

Believer, be stedfast, unmoveable, always looking for, and hastening unto the day of God. In patience possess thy soul. Let nothing move thee, for He is faithful who has called thee, who also will do it. Amongst the faithless be thou faithful. His Word cannot fail. He waits: do thou wait for Him; remembering the Divine oracle, "It is good for a man that he both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."†

(*d.*) The Guests, who are alone truly partakers of the Lord's Supper, shew again, how suitable is the Pledge. For who are they who shall be then admitted to His presence? They are the Saved, the Holy, the Happy. And who but these, now, in a greater or less degree, are real partakers of

\* Is. xxxv.

† Lam. iii.

the table of the Lord? None but such are the Guests whom the Lord there entertains. These are saved from their sins; for to them He has been made through the Spirit, Jesus, a Saviour. The guilt of sin in them He has removed through his atonement. The power of sin He has broken through his Spirit.

And because they are saved they are Holy. The same Spirit of holiness works in them to the sanctification of body, soul, and spirit, and so fits them for the Saviour's presence.

And, because holy, therefore are they Happy. Happy in being first reconciled to God by their sins being blotted out, and then in having the fruits of that reconciliation, even the influence of the Spirit, shed abroad in their hearts. They have "joy and peace in believing." They "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And, thus, in their Salvation, Holiness, and Happiness, they form an apt representation of that Church which, perfected in body and soul, the Lord shall take to Himself "at his appearing."

(e.) Catholicity is another manner in which the Supper of the Lord becomes a Pledge to Believers of the Second Advent.

All the Church is made partaker of this Ordinance. It is open to Believers.—To them *only*, And to *each* and *all* of them. Thus it is Catholic

to the Church, Exclusive to the World. So will it be as to the Future. There shall be an exclusion of *all* the wicked; an admission of *all* the righteous. *They, They only*—And *each* and *all* of them shall be admitted to the Saviour's presence. Not one of them shall be wanting. Their names have been "written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world." Their place He has prepared, and it cannot be vacant. They are members of his body, without whom (the least of them) that body would be maimed and incomplete. All, All shall appear at the appointed time, and each assist to make up the perfect symmetry, and exact proportion of that Catholic assembly, which in full perfection and harmonious order, shall through eternity show forth the praises of Him, who, before the foundation of the world, ordained it to the praise of the glory of his grace.

(*f.*) There is only one other particular which I shall notice. It is this—

In the Eucharist, the people of God enjoy His *spiritual* presence. At "his coming and his kingdom" they shall possess his *personal* presence; they "shall see Him as He is." Now we walk by faith; but then, through sight and fruition, faith shall be brought to its close. The present is a dispensation of faith. Ours is a "life of faith," a "walk of faith;" it is "the word of faith" which

we preach, and “a death of faith” which we die.\* But that will be a dispensation of sight. We shall see Him “whom having not seen we love.” Oh, beatific vision! Oh, joy unutterable, of seeing the glory of God! “They shall see his face, and they shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” Even so, blessed Jesus, come to thy expecting Church, soon clothe us “with our house from heaven,” that these bodies being changed we may put on our “spiritual body.” So shall we be conformed to the likeness of thy glory. So, “waking up after thy likeness, we shall be satisfied with it.” And thus, we who see Thee now by faith, “shall have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory.”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Thus, in these several particulars, have we shown the Lord's Supper to be a “PLEDGE of the Lord's Return,” as well as an ASSURANCE thereof.

And may this delightful view of the subject be in its reception a means of quickening the faith and hope of the People of God.

III. We now conclude with some Remarks naturally arising from our subject.

\* Heb. xi. 13.

1. How EXTENSIVE, both as to time, circumstances, and effects, is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It regards the Past, the Present, the Future. It is a Memorial, a Communion, a PLEDGE, of full and final salvation. Here the Atonement, the Intercession, the RETURN of the Lord, are presented to the eye of faith; and in this comprehensive institution the Believer has displayed to his wondering soul the extended riches of redemption.

For the Past, He remembers the promise of "the seed of the woman," the types, the prophecies, the incarnation, the words of grace, "neither do I condemn thee," "thy sins be forgiven thee," "she hath done what she could." He remembers the agony, the shame, the cross. For the Present the Believer enjoys communion with his risen and ascended Lord, both in His divine and human nature. And for the Future, in the Eucharist he possesses an EARNEST OF THE LORD'S RETURN. Whilst, as to the Effects of the Institution, to his *soul* it is a means of grace, and to his *body* a means of communion with Christ's exalted humanity; so that "our sinful bodies are made clean by his body." And thus for both we are able to receive and apply that form of sound words—"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," and "the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,

which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.”\*

2. How ABUNDANT is the LOVE and WISDOM of Christ to his Church in this Institution. He will have her constantly looking to Him and waiting for his return. Hence, He takes those means which are most effective to quicken her faith and hope. She is prone to forget Him, and here He calls her to remembrance. Or, does she languish for his presence, saying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him?” Here, He grants himself to her vows. Here, He brings her “into his banqueting house.” Here, she sits down under his shadow with great delight; and here, He enables her to say, “I have found Him whom my soul loveth.” And thus the soul possesses an earnest of His full and perpetual presence in eternity.

O Believer, admire the riches of his wisdom, the overflowings of his love towards thee. He has not left thee without witness, and that which He hath appointed thee is precisely that which is most suited to thy state. Thou art weak; here is strength. Thou art disconsolate; here is consolation. Thou art lonely; here is communion. Thou art waiting; here is the earnest of his eternal presence. Does weariness oppress thee? Behold refreshment. Does thirst assail thee? Behold the cup of salvation.

\* Note B.



Or, dost thou hunger? Lo, He prepareth a table before thee. See, then, and enjoy his abounding goodness; and “eat, O, Friends, yea, drink abundantly,” even with Him who “feedeth among the lilies,” and who is our “Beloved and our Friend.” Jesus, we see Thee now by faith; let us soon behold thee as thou art, in all thy glorious perfections.

3. Further, Observe, that in such a repast there can be NOTHING SAD or dolorous. This is not a *fast*, but a *feast*; and thus we are exhorted to “take this holy Sacrament to our *comfort*.” There is often great error here. *The whole character of the Lord's Supper is constantly mistaken, and that, even by the Saints.* Satan has great power in this. That sweet and heavenly repast is looked upon as something “awful.” There is some undefined terror and fear connected with it. It is approached, less as a festival than as a funeral; and that which is a cup of salvation is received with a trembling hand, as though it were a cup of condemnation. God is not honoured in this; it is not the “spirit of bondage” and of fear, which his people have received, but, the Spirit of adoption. This Ordinance is to be approached with *reverence*, but not with *alarm*. It is a Father's table, to which his children, his reconciled children, are invited to come. They are the pardoned who meet here, in anticipation of their LORD'S RETURN. They are

children, not slaves. Let them, then, not dishonour that table by a *servile spirit*, for "they have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."\*

Approach, therefore, O, believer, with confidence, these patterns of the "holiest." Art thou not justified? Is not thine iniquity pardoned? And does not the blood of Jesus cleanse from *all* sin? See, then, thy standing; humbly, yet confidently assume thy privilege; for, in thy felicity Christ is well pleased; and, in thy comfort and enlargement the Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul. It is a *full* salvation which Christ has purchased; and it is to thy comfort, and his honour, that thou shouldest *fully* in joy be made partaker of it.

4. Again: If the Lord's Supper be, as we have considered it, a feast for believers, and a Pledge of their Lord's return, it follows that they will desire its FREQUENT CELEBRATION. If it be a means of grace, and an assurance of the coming of Him whom they so earnestly and fully love, they will, of course, constantly desire that, in which they see so lively an earnest of his coming. Yes; the administration of the Eucharist should be frequent, that believers may have frequent opportunities of communion with a crucified, a risen, and a coming Saviour. And, being frequent, they should lose,

\* Heb. x.

if they understand their privilege, no opportunity of sharing its benefits. Here, again, what frequent errors occur! Surely, were the hearts of his professing people flaming with love to their Lord, they would be longing for his return, and constant at that Ordinance which in so lively a manner sets it forth. But, Alas! Love is cold. The return of the Saviour, consequently, is little sought; and hence, partly arises the cause why so frequently the pledge of that epiphany is disregarded.

O you who bear the name of Christ, remember your daily prayer, "thy Kingdom come." What, then, if He should presently appear and bring that kingdom? Do you "love his appearing?" Do you desire that kingdom? What! Is it that you are drawing nigh unto Him with your lips, whilst your hearts are far from Him? Beware, Oh! Beware, lest out of your own mouth He should judge you. Consider your ways; and, "examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves."

5. Lastly, what an additional MOTIVE TO HOLINESS is there to those who observe in this ordinance the pledge of a coming Saviour. You, my friends, here perceive, not only a crucified, but a glorified, Jesus. Here is an additional call for sanctification. You love, and wait, his appearing. Now, "every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself

even as He is pure." Oh! the spotless purity of Christ. Oh! the holiness which befits his waiting people. "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord." Soon, He comes to render unto every man according to his works: "With righteousness shall he judge the earth, and the people with equity." Then, it will not be the knowledge of those Divine truths, of which we have been speaking, that will save, but, the fruits of those truths in holiness which will be rewarded. It is not the sentiment connected with the Lord's coming, the poetry, and imagination, allied to that stupendous fact, which will benefit, but it is the *application* of the doctrine to the *heart*, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which will save. There are tremendous realities connected with that event, which "will sift the nations with the sieve of vanity," and thoroughly separate the chaff from the wheat. Nothing short of a *real, experimental, acquaintance with Christ* will stand the test of "eternal judgment." Then, Believers will be made manifest that they are of God. Then, Professors will too late perceive the difference between the *form* and the *power* of godliness. Let, then, the self-deceived be undeceived. But, let the just Ones be in their "path, as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Soon that day in its unutterable splendour shall

burst upon us. Ere long, the "Dayspring from on high" shall visit us, and on a benighted world pour all the splendour of his presence. Soon shall we "see the heavens opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." For, "behold, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain."

Wherefore, animated by such hope, persevere, O Christian, in well-doing, even to the end. We know in whom we have believed. "He is faithful that promised," and, "in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." "Therefore," my beloved Brethren, "be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

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#### NOTE A.

The exposition of the text would be deficient did we not inquire whether our Lord may be understood as asserting that He will literally drink wine with his disciples in a future state.

Our belief concerning our own bodies is, that, after death, the same bodies will rise, though glorious and spiritual. They will, therefore, still be material; even as the Patriarch Job

says, "in my flesh I shall see God." There must, consequently, be some material place appointed for their habitation and enjoyment, suited to their then superior condition. Bishop Horne somewhere says, "the idea which some persons form of heaven is, sitting on a bare cloud and singing Hallelujah!" "Let us, however," says the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," "try to persuade ourselves that the future and unseen world is as simply natural and true, as is this homely world of land and water, trees and houses, with which we have to do."\* "It consists," says Dr. Chalmers, "with all we know of God's administration, that materialism shall be perpetuated in the full bloom and vigour of immortality. We hail the information, (contained in the passage below quoted,) that, instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and of mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights, and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will be most profusely scattered over the 'new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' "†

Thus, the Scriptures reveal materialism as connected both with our bodies and our residence in a future state. Now, what is our belief respecting the body of Christ? We believe that "Christ took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; *wherewith* He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until He return to judge all men, at the last day."‡ Thus, we believe, also, in the materialism of Christ's present human nature. Now, if in glorified materialism the Lord and his saints are, as we further believe, hereafter, to meet together, why may not the text be literally understood that they may eat and drink together? Angels, with whom we are wont to associate less of materialism, have eaten and drank.§ So did the

\* "Physical Theory of Another Life." P. 228.

† Discourse on 2 Pet. iii. 13.

‡ Article iv.

§ Gen. xviii. and xix.



Lord before He ascended, though, of course, then He was not in His glorified body. The words of our Lord are very plain, "Till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So in St. Luke, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." "These declarations are in unison with each other, and not without great violence and contradiction to the plain meaning of terms, to be otherwise than literally understood. It is to be expected that Christ will again eat and drink with his Apostles, under some circumstances or other, in the kingdom of the Father, when it arrives."\*

The writer, in conclusion, would not be understood as attaching any particular importance to this part of the subject. It is only of consequence as "tending to bring our religious conceptions into definite alliance with the real world, and with nature, and to break up a little those vague and powerless notions, which place our religious expectations at a dim remoteness from whatever is substantial and effective."†

#### NOTE B.

The sacraments do not *give* faith, but *confirm* it. There must, first, be faith, else a Sacrament is to the receiver no Sacrament at all. This is always pre-supposed. Thus, our Church, "to such as rightly, worthily, and with *faith* receive the same." And again, in the same Twenty-eighth Article, "The mean whereby the body of Christ is received, and eaten in the Supper is *faith*." Thus, faith actually existing before the ordinance being received is *increased* thereby. Whence, it is asserted, that by the Sacraments God "*strengthens* and *confirms* our faith in Him." (Art. 25.) And, "Faith is *confirmed*, and grace *increased* by virtue of prayer unto God." (Art. 27.) Whence it follows that the Sacraments *do not give grace*, much less justify; but, that a believer being already by faith justified, comes to these ordinances for *increase of Grace*.

\* Greswell on the Parables, v. 1. pp. 211, 212.

† Physical Theory, p. 227.

## LECTURE VI.

### THE JOY OF THE FAITHFUL MINISTER AT CHRIST'S COMING.

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1 PETER V. 1.

*“ When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”*

THE doctrine of the Second Advent, or coming of Christ, has now been so much discussed in preceding lectures, that on the present occasion I do not feel called upon to enter into that question; more especially as the main object of this discourse is the joy of the faithful minister at the coming of Christ, and not the consideration of the coming itself.

My earnest prayer is, that while we are engaged in the discussion of subjects of such high moment, and where it is so possible to err, we may be

endued with the spirit of wisdom, and a sound mind; be kept from all rash interpretations of prophecy, and avoid entering upon too much minuteness of detail. The frame of mind most suitable in such an undertaking, is that which is inculcated in the words addressed to Moses, on the Mount: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."\*

May the Divine blessing, then, rest upon us while we endeavour to describe—

*The joy of the faithful minister at Christ's coming.*

Faithful is a term used in Scripture to denote an attribute and qualification that is intended to be the symbol and pledge of every other. All is included within the range of its comprehensive meaning. Thus it is said of Moses, that he was "faithful to him that appointed him;"† of Daniel, "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful."‡ St. Paul observes, "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."§ It is remarked of Timothy, that he was "faithful in the Lord."|| The great apostle of the Gentiles, also, in reference to his own minis-

\* Exod. iii. 5.            † Heb. iii. 2.            ‡ Dan. vi. 4.

§ 1 Cor. iv. 2.            || 1 Cor. vi. 17.

terial character, declares that he had "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."\*

But to enter more largely into the question, let us ask, what is implied by *the faithful minister of Christ?*

I know not any subject of deeper importance than such an inquiry at the present moment, when the revival of piety in our Church is contemplated, among some of its members, by means which, in the judgment of reflecting and enlightened minds, can never be effected by such instrumentality. It is not by the removal of ancient land-marks, and depreciating the venerable names of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Jewel, and Hooper, (names long enshrined in the memory of the wise and good, and pillars in the Protestant Church of these realms,) that we are likely to advance the cause of truth, however enforced by zeal, and recommended by devotedness. Nor is it by a reference *to the Fathers, and to tradition*, that such an end is to be accomplished. These are the subordinate, but not primary sources of interpretation; and then only so far good, as they are confirmed by the concurring authority of Scripture. Our appeal must be made to a higher standard, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word,*

\* 1 Cor. vii. 25.

*it is because there is no light in them.*"\* It is not sufficient that a minister be devotional in his spirit, zealous in his work, and without reproach in his external conduct. There may be "a zeal," but "not according to knowledge;" reverence for the forms, without the power and vitality of religion; sparks, but those of our own kindling;† the law and the Gospel neither properly understood, nor enforced to their respective ends and purposes; the cross of Christ, but not Christ upon the cross.

What then is it that constitutes the character of *the faithful minister of Christ*?

He must be able to appeal to higher credentials than those which we have just enumerated. He must be "sound in the faith;" "in doctrine uncorrupt;" "holding fast the form of sound words." There can be no sound piety without sound doctrine." "Yea, rather," says one of the articles of our Church, "for that they are not done (viz. works), as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature

\* Isaiah viii. 20.

† The whole of the passage to which reference is here made, strongly demands our attention: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." (Isaiah l. 11.)

of sin.”\* What this doctrine is, the apostle himself informs us: “We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ’s sake.” “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ, and him crucified;” and he adds, “though we or an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed.” This language evidently comprehends the whole system of man’s fall and recovery,—free justification by faith, through the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ; together with the gracious operations of the Divine Spirit, in all its enlightening, converting, and sanctifying influences.

On the subject of the great doctrine of justification by faith only, emphatically called “the article of a standing or falling Church;” and without the knowledge of which no minister of Christ is entitled to the appellation of “*faithful*,” I beg to quote the expressive words of Bishop Horsley: “That man is justified by faith,” he observes, “without the works of the law, was the uniform doctrine of the first Reformers. It is a far more ancient doctrine. It was the doctrine of the whole college of apostles. It is more ancient still. It was the doctrine of the prophets. It is older

\* See Article 13th of the Church of England.



than the prophets. It was the religion of the patriarchs.”\*

Oh ! that the precious truths of the Gospel may be “ the weapons of our warfare ” in the Divine science of saving immortal souls. It is the everlasting Gospel that is God’s appointed way, and which he will alone honour with his blessing. It is this which is “ the ministration of the Spirit,” and “ mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds : casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”†

Christ, then, and his Gospel, are the great theme of the faithful minister ; and the love of Christ that part of it on which he most delights to dwell. In proclaiming his message, he takes care himself to feed on the heavenly manna before he administers it to others, and never presumes that he can be an instrument for converting his flock, unless he is first converted himself. His heart is in his work. His manner, deportment, habits, and sentiments, are befitting his sacred office. Like the apostle, he goes “ from house to house,” trying to win the affections of his people, that he may better succeed in winning their souls.

\* See the Charges of Bishop Horsley.

† 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

His closet is his *second sanctuary*, where he prays and intercedes for his beloved charge, and gains fresh supplies for the ensuing Sabbath. His great object is, to be “free from the blood of all men;” to “study to show himself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” It is by the happy union of these several offices that he becomes “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use;” and thus the souls that seem to be withheld from the preacher are sometimes found to be granted to the prayers of the closet, and to the zeal, the love, and even to the tears of the pastor.

Finally, his life is a life of truth and holiness; his end is peace, his hope is heaven, and his memorial may be found in the following words: “The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.”\*

I now proceed to consider more particularly *the joy of the faithful minister at Christ’s coming*. This joy may be described as resulting:

1st. *From the event itself, and from the design and circumstances of that event.*

The whole creation is represented by St. Paul as looking forward with intense anxiety and expect-

\* Mal. ii. 5, 6.

tation to this long wished for period, as the signal of its deliverance, and of "the glory that shall be revealed." "The whole creation," he observes, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."\*

The whole creation, that is, man, the intelligent part of it,—the inferior or brute creation, and the general framework and organization of nature. All mankind labour under the consciousness of a misery from which there is no escape. No wisdom, nor power, nor philosophy, can reverse it, because it is interwoven with the very constitution of our being—the appointed order of things; the penalty of the first man's disobedience. It is the same with the brute creation, over which the sovereignty was given to man that he might exercise it not wrongfully, but like God, in mercy. The physical world utters the same cry, and bears the same testimony. The order and harmony of nature is impaired. The storms and tempests that deform the sky, the inward fires that convulse the earth, the terrible earthquakes that entomb cities in their abyss, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the sickness that destroyeth at noon-day, all denote

\* Rom. viii. 22, 23.

the fall and guilt of man, and the truth of the primeval curse. Even the children of God, eminently favoured as they are in having "the first-fruits of the Spirit," and enjoying much of his peace and presence in the soul, still feel the workings of indwelling sin, and are subject to like trials and infirmities with others. They are often reminded that this is not their rest. Thus the patriarchs confessed that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and desired "a better country, that is an heavenly," "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."\* David also exclaims, "when shall I come, and appear before God?"† "The souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held," are represented, "under the altar," as crying "with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"‡ With what repose and delight, then, does the heart turn to the dawn of that glorious day, when the throes of creation shall cease, and the coming of Christ shall be the signal for making "all things new." When there shall be no cloud to intercept the full light of glorious day, no care to corrode the heart, no bereavement to call forth

\* Heb. xi. 10, 13, 16.

† Ps. xlii. 2.

‡ Rev. vi. 10.

the sigh, no sickness to consume the body, nor sin to corrupt the soul. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."\*

But it is *the investiture of Christ in the full rights and privileges of his everlasting kingdom*, that gives to his coming its character of deep interest and grandeur: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."† This representation may be partly figurative, but

\* Rev. xxi. 4.

† Rev. xix.

in its main features it partakes more of the character of a real narrative of facts, than of the language of symbolical imagery. It coincides with the celebrated Vision of Daniel: "And behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."\* There is a similar passage, also referring to the same time and occasion, in Revelation: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."† Alas! how little has the Church yet seen of the glories of Christ's kingdom, and of his conquests over sin and Satan! How often is the Christian minister constrained to exclaim, "who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"‡ With what unblushing effrontery does Socinianism announce its lectures,§ and the malignant spirit of Infidelity try to propagate its soul-destroying

\* Dan. vii. 13, 14.

† Rev. i. 7.

‡ Isa. liii. 1.

§ Advertisements of this kind recently appeared in the public papers.



tenets ! “ The God of this world ” still continues to blind “ the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”\*

With what joy, then, will the faithful servant of Christ welcome the glorious appearing of his Lord and Master ; prepared at length to vindicate his authority, to repay vengeance to his adversaries, to rectify all the dark and mysterious dispensations of his Providence, and invested with the title of King of kings, and Lord of lords, coming to reign over a conquered and a ransomed world.

But secondly,

*It is the glory and presence of Christ that will form the chief feature, as it will also constitute the chief joy of this great event.*

The glory of Christ may be considered to be that which he has in common with the eternal Godhead of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit. It is referred to in John xvii. 5. “ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.* ” It is, however, the Divine attributes, as illustrated in the great work of redemption, that will give to them their fullest harmony and splendour ; and it is the contemplation of this

\* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

glory, and their own participation in it, that will be the unceasing employment of glorified spirits in heaven.

Such was the prayer of Christ in that impressive series of petitions recorded in John xvii. 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." So also in Col. iii. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And again, in the words of the text: "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

What this glory is, it is impossible for the finite powers of man to comprehend, much less to endeavour to describe. Our views are too limited and earthly to realize the grandeur of such a spectacle. Here we know in part and we see in part. There we shall see "face to face," and "know even as also we are known."\* Our enquiries, however, on so glorious a theme, are in some measure aided by what is revealed to us on this subject in Scripture. Thus, when Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, the seraphims are described as veiling their faces in humility before him, while the Prophet was constrained to exclaim, "Woe is me, I am

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”\* St. Paul, also, after his vision in the third heavens, required the thorn in the flesh to mitigate the glory of such a scene. We know, also, that St. John was betrayed into an act of Divine worship from the effect produced by the appearance of the apocalyptic angel. Perhaps the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, in company with Moses and Elias, is calculated to afford us the fullest representation both of the glory of Christ and of his glorified saints. The vision also unfolded in the heavenly Jerusalem further discloses the grandeur of the Divine presence.

*“And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”†* It needs not the rays of created light to illuminate those boundless regions of everlasting bliss and holiness. Unveiled and uncreated glory require no subordinate means to increase their fulness. “God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

It seems highly probable that the habitual contemplation of this glory of God, and of the Lamb, will be accompanied by a powerful reaction on

\* Isaiah vi. 1—5.

† Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

our own minds. It will awaken correspondent feelings, and fill the soul with holy aspirations after the same glorious image. In like manner as the countenance of Moses shone from the reflected glory of God, with a splendour so great that the children of Israel were unable to bear it—so this habitual beholding of God, and of the Lamb, will be the means of imparting continual emanations from the same fountain of life and glory; and the soul will be increasingly assimilated to the same image of holiness, love, and blessedness. “We all,” says the Apostle, “with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”\* If it be thus on earth, in seeing the reflection only, what will be the unceasing contemplation of the Divine presence in glory?

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”\*

*Union with Christ* will form a never-failing source, both of joy and of holiness. If the Apostle could exclaim, “to me to live is Christ, and to die will be gain;” *that* gain must evidently imply a still more enlarged realization of the same principle, a complete union with Christ as the living

\* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† Psalm xvii. 15.

Head, and full and everlasting possession. Here Christ is enjoyed in the heart by faith, there he will be known and seen in all the glory of the beatific vision.

3. *The gathering together in glory of all the ransomed Church of Christ* will form an abounding subject for heavenly delight and contemplation. It is the high privilege of the Church below to be assured, “But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; *to the general assembly, and Church of the first-born*, which are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, *and to the spirits of just men made perfect*; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant.”\* If such be the joy of the earthly anticipation, what must be the heavenly and everlasting reality?

It was the formation of this universal Church that the Saviour proposed to himself as the design for which he came into the world; “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him;” “Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness

\* Heb. xii. 22—24.

of Christ.”\* *The perfect man* here mentioned, signifies the completeness of Christ in all the members of his mystical body, elect, sanctified, and finally perfected in glory. There is also another passage of similar import. “Who gave himself for it (the Church) that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”† It was the prospect of accomplishing this great work that sustained the Redeemer in all the depths of his humiliation, in his agony in the garden,‡ and in his death upon the cross.§ It was to this end he lived and died and rose again. “Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”|| What a stupendous idea is conveyed to the mind by this vast assemblage in glory of the redeemed of every age, tongue, kindred, and people—patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, holy martyrs and white-robed saints gathered from among both Jews and Gentiles; all ransomed by the same blood; sanctified by the same Spirit; united under the same living head; breathing an atmosphere of peace, holiness, and love; endeared by the recollection of the same trials, and the experience of the same victorious grace, faithfulness, and truth; and all joining in

\* Eph. i. 10; iv. 13.

† Eph. v. 27.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 39.

§ John xix. 30.

|| Heb. xii. 2.



one universal song of praise, "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."\* "*Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"†

How will the faithful minister of Christ rejoice in meeting this "great multitude," which no man can number, standing "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."‡ Next to union with Christ himself, union with the Church of Christ in glory must necessarily be the nearest, as well as the most exalted source of happiness to faithful ministers, because it is in order to the

\* Rev. v. 9, 10, 12.

† Rev. vii. 15—17.

‡ Rev. vii. 9.

establishment of Christ's kingdom that they are divinely commissioned by their Lord, pledged by their solemn vow, and consecrated by their office. Ministers are Christ's accredited agents, his standard-bearers, stars in his right hand, the "lights of the world," the shepherds by whom he feeds the flock, the depositories of his grace, the appointed vessels in which are contained the riches of the heavenly treasure; "earthen vessels," indeed, "that the excellency may be of God," but still vessels chosen for his honour and service. A standing ministry is essential to the very existence of Christianity. They are the mouth by which Christ speaks—the hand with which he plants—the instruments by which principalities and powers of darkness are despoiled of their victims, and jewels are added to the crown of the Redeemer. It is through their ministrations that the living stones are built up into a holy temple, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ\*—that churches are edified, the world reprov'd, the Saviour exalted, and sinners called into the kingdom of his grace, till they are finally perfected in glory.

But animating and glorious as is this prospect, there is an additional feature in it that may well endear this hope to the faithful servant of the

\* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Lord, viz., fourthly, *His reunion with those that were once the objects of his ministerial care and joy.*

“For what is our hope,” says St. Paul, “or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” “For ye are our glory, and joy.”\* The churches once planted by the hands of the great Apostle to the Gentiles now lie mouldering in the dust. But the slumbering ashes of the Thessalonian converts shall one day revive at the trump of the archangel; and he that planted, and they that were given to him in the Lord, shall greet one another with holy joy, and mutual recognition. The doctrine of recognition, in a future state, is a truth to be plainly gathered from Scripture. “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”† The memory of objects dear to us on earth, and the pleadings of natural affection, survive even in the regions of lost and accursed spirits. The rich man in hell could think of his five brethren, and be solicitous that that they should not enter into that place of torment. If feelings like these exist amidst scenes of such guilt and misery, surely we may presume that they will be identified with the joys of heaven, and form an ingredient in our future

\* 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

† 2 Sam. xii. 23.

happiness and glory. The husband and the wife, the mother and the child, and all the various ties of affectionate love and friendship, if sanctified by grace, shall find their reunion perfected in glory. There, too, the faithful minister shall recognise the endeared objects of his earthly joy and hope, and presenting them together with himself, before the same throne of grace and glory, shall exclaim, "Here am I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me."\*

How do the honoured names, in our own Church, of a Venn, a Romaine, a Newton, a Scott, a Robinson, a Richmond, a Biddulph, and others, witnesses chosen of God for reviving the long slumbering doctrines of the glorious Reformation, rise up in remembrance before us, as participating in the joy of that great day of recognition. How, too, will a Schwartz, a Brainerd, an Elliot, a Martin, and men like-minded, labourers in the wide field of Missionary enterprise, bring their good sheaves with them for the great harvest of the Church in that day of reward and glory.

Far, too, be from us that sentiment which would consign to the *uncovenanted mercies of God* all who are not within the same pale, and of the same form of ecclesiastical polity with ourselves. This would indeed be unchuraching the various sections of the

\* Isaiah viii. 18.

Christian community at home, and the reformed Churches abroad. We confess that we have no fellowship with so exclusive and intolerant a creed. "*We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.*"\* We hail, then, as co-partners in the same joy, the various tribes of the armies of Israel, when each, with their respective leaders, pastors and converts, so far as they hold "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," shall all meet and rejoice together in glory.

Let us briefly consider—

*The measure of the joy and reward of the faithful minister of Christ.*

The measure of this joy will be proportioned to the office and character sustained, and the fidelity with which its duties have been executed. Thus it is said, "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers."† All were not apostles, nor were all prophets. "There were diversities of gifts, and differences of administrations, yet the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, which worketh all in all."‡ The reason of this inequality was its necessity, and its wise adaptation to the proposed end, viz., "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body

\* 1 Cor. xi. 16.

† Eph. iv. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.

of Christ.”\* And so there will be the apostles’ reward, that of the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, each according to his office, and to the extent and fidelity of his services. It is not demanded that a minister be found *successful*; the language of Scripture tells us “it is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*.”† David was not permitted to build the temple, nevertheless God declared, “it is good for thee that it was in thine heart.” It is the purity of the motive, the single eye, and the holy aim, that determines the character of every act in the eyes of him with whom we have to do, as well as the nature and extent of the reward. All will be happy, though not in the same measure and degree; like so many vessels, each differing in size, and yet all full. “He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. They gathered every man according to his eating.”‡

5. *God’s judgment on mystic Babylon, which is reserved for Christ’s coming, will form a signal occasion of joy to the faithful minister.* It is at this eventful crisis that great Babylon, she that is described as drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, “shall come up in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” The time is

\* Eph. iv. 12.

† 1 Cor. iv. 2.

‡ Exod. xvi. 18.



at hand. I am aware, that the modern revival of Popery is alleged as an argument against this assertion; but the objection has no foundation in truth. It is rather confirmatory of it. It is when Rome saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," that her plagues come suddenly upon her. "In one day, death, mourning, and famine." She is bewailed as "a mighty city," with all the attributes of pomp and regal splendour about her. "Alas! alas! that great city, Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."\* In the hour preceding her fall she is in the fulness of her strength; the next, prostrate in the dust; or, to quote language still more emphatic and awful, "she shall be burned with fire." Well may the faithful minister of Christ rejoice, for it was her usurped supremacy that clothed the Church with sackcloth, and sent her into the wilderness. Her fall awakens hallelujahs above, and songs of praise in the Church below. "Rejoice over her, ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Her doom is recorded by the unerring pen of inspiration. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."†

\* See Rev. xviii.

† Rev. xviii. 21.

There seem to be strong grounds for believing that the seat of "the beast, and of the false prophet" (Rome itself), will become a perpetual scene of desolation, like ancient Babylon; or, as some commentators have asserted, in a state resembling Sodom and Gomorrah, in her judgment. This supposition is founded on the following passages: "*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; these were both cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.*"\*

"*And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.*"†

The period shall arrive, to accommodate the words of an Oriental saying, when the spider shall weave her web amidst the ruins of the Vatican; and the owl shall sing her watch-song on the tower of St. Angelo.

\* Rev. xix. 20.

† Rev. xviii. 22, 23.

May the above solemn sentence of condemnation operate as a timely and salutary warning to our own Church ; and may those of its members, who wish to assimilate her doctrines and practices to the corrupt model of apostate Rome, see whether there be not reason to fear that they who share in her *guilt*, may be called upon to participate in her *judgments*.

But it is now time to draw these remarks to a conclusion. I shall beg, therefore, simply to advert to the last great event that may justly be considered as furnishing a most enlarged sense of holy joy ; viz.,

*The Millennial state of peace and holiness.*

Never did the harp of prophecy send forth notes more melodious than when this predicted period formed the subject of the song. The solitary place was to be made glad ; the wilderness to be transformed into a garden of Eden. It was to blossom exceedingly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. Fountains were to spring up in the midst of the valleys ; rivers to flow in the desert ; and the *new heavens and the new earth* were to replace a world exhibiting the sad traces of the primeval fall, and the entrance of death and sin into the world.

In how many forms of evil has the abounding of sin, and the deep depravity of the human heart,

manifested itself in this fallen world! How have the labours of the faithful servant of Christ been counteracted, in every age, by the prevalence of ignorance, bigotry, persecution of the true Church, and corruptions in doctrine and practice among professing Christians! How “the god of this world blinds the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”\* What a large portion of mankind are the subjects of Heathen idolatry, and superstition, or under the dominion of the false prophet! How much of the interior of Africa still remains unexplored; while China, by the mysterious dispensation of Providence, is only just rendered accessible to European commerce. O that it may prove to be the precursor of British missionary enterprise, and the Gospel be faithfully proclaimed to the largest associated population in the known world. In our own beloved country, what strife and divisions are there in Churches; and how little of real unity even among members of the same communion. With what refreshment of spirit, then, does the faithful servant of Christ look forward to that glorious period, when the strife of tongues, and the war of tumultuous passions shall be exchanged for the notes of harmony and

\* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

peace—when society shall be reconstructed on principles more analogous to the Divine will, and earth shall bear a closer resemblance to heaven—when “kings shall be the nursing fathers of the Church, and their queens its nursing mothers”—when God “shall destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations”<sup>\*</sup>—when pastors shall everywhere be holy, and the people righteous; when “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days;” “and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”<sup>†</sup>

What an assemblage of events will usher in the glorious period of millennial blessedness. *Judgments upon the nations.* “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”<sup>‡</sup> This is elsewhere called “that great day of God Almighty,” the battle of “Armageddon.”<sup>§</sup> *The national conversion of God’s ancient people,* || or “a nation born in a day.”<sup>¶</sup> *Satan*

<sup>\*</sup> Isa. xxv. 7.

<sup>†</sup> Dan. vii. 27.

<sup>‡</sup> Ps. ii. 9.

<sup>§</sup> Rev. xvi. 14, 16.

|| Zech. xii. 10; xiv. 4.

¶ Isa. lxvi. 8.

*cast into the bottomless pit, and bound for a thousand years.\* The first resurrection, or that of saints and holy martyrs.† The union of living with risen saints.‡ Millennial blessedness.* “And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”§ This reign of Christ, with his saints, was universally held by the whole orthodox Christian Church, in the age immediately following that of the apostles; nor was it anciently denied but by heretics, and such as denied the Apocalypse. It was also believed by the early Jewish doctors.|| It gradually became mingled with curious conceits, and fictions; and in our own country, especially, in the time of the Commonwealth; and so fell into disrepute. But it is the province of true wisdom to discriminate truth from error, and not to reject what is essentially true, because, through human infirmity, it is so often corrupted with what is false.

In what impassioned strains does the evangelical prophet describe the glory and blessedness of that day, primarily applicable to the Jewish nation; and, in its secondary or enlarged sense, to the Zion of the whole earth.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates

\* Rev. xx. 2, 3.    † Rev. xx. 4, 5.    ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

§ Rev. xx. 4.

|| See Mede p. 943, 944.



Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”\* What a theme does this mighty dispensation of Providential dealings, and of the glories of Divine grace, unfold to the Church of Christ, and to the Lord’s ministering servants. How little is it appreciated, because not understood; nor understood, because not made the subject of study, earnest prayer, and holy meditation. And yet the word of truth declares it; primitive antiquity confirms it; and the extraordinary signs of the times announce that these events are rapidly hastening onwards to their consummation.

Such, then, are the joys of the faithful minister of Christ, at his Lord’s coming; and such the sources whence they may be presumed to flow.

Happy they that are already within the veil, waiting the morn of the resurrection for that full perfection in glory, which seems reserved for the reunion of the risen body with the immaterial spirit. The perfect man is composed of body,

\* Isaiah lx. 18, 19, 20.

soul, and spirit. Separation, therefore, must be like the absence of a companion, and a friend, with whom we have held a long and familiar converse, identified with every past feeling, whether of joy or sorrow, of humiliation or praise. On the other hand, the reunion of the body with the glorified spirit must resemble the renewal of a long suspended intercourse, free from all further alloy of sin, trial, disease, and death—the worm-wood and the gall that once marked the days of our earthly pilgrimage, but now changed unto the image of a glorious immortality, with new and more enlarged powers of thought and perception, adapted to the faculties of the glorified spirit, all flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and returning thither in endless streams of gratitude and praise.

How animating, on that day, will be the sound of those gracious words, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”\* Thus the charge over the five or ten cities, mentioned in Luke xix. 17—19, may refer to a guardianship, like that of angels here, in Christ’s millennial kingdom; and so glorified spirits may be permitted to hold communion, seen or unseen, with saints below.

\* Matt. xxv. 23.

But whatever may be the precise nature of the employment, it is sufficient to know, that "*they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.*"\* O! that ministers might be quickened by such precious promises into higher aspirations after holiness; that the heart might be inflamed with a more ardent love, and the tongue be touched so as to burst forth into sublimer strains of piety and zeal. May the time come, when "the Spirit shall be poured out from on high," and the world lose its power to ensnare, and Satan cease to destroy, and grace be victorious to sanctify and save.

While we have thus described the joys of the faithful minister, what a contrast will be presented by the rebuke and condemnation of the unworthy and slothful servant. "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost." "And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd." "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill."† The solemn denunciations then follow, and God declares, "I will require my

\* Dan. xii. 3.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 5, 6.

flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock.” \*

I cannot conclude without the brief consideration of a question intimately connected with this subject; viz., *What is best calculated, under God's blessing, to produce a faithful and effective minister of the Gospel?* This is a momentous inquiry, and especially under the present circumstances of our Church.

It is evident, that in order to this end, there must be *an agency that is Divine, an instrumentality that is human, and means suited to the attainment of the proposed end.* All grace is of God, the living fountain of truth and holiness. It is he who can alone make us “able ministers of the New Testament,” and fit us, by the power of his Spirit, for the solemn duties of our calling. Personal holiness, then, is the indispensable qualification for the ministry; nor should any man think that he can ever be an instrument in the conversion of others, who is not first converted himself. But it is the character of the means employed, which I beg briefly to notice. That the Church of England is apostolical in its constitution, scriptural in its doctrines, and devotional in its services, is a fact that may be established by the most satisfactory evidence.

\* Ezek. xxxiv. 10.

What is needed is, that *the practice should be made more conformable to so excellent a theory*; and that men should be more systematically trained in the knowledge of the truths and duties of their profession, before they are called upon to proclaim and discharge them. The means hitherto employed (though in advance on former times) are still not sufficiently adequate to the magnitude and responsibility of such a charge. *A more effective discipline* is another desideratum, with promptness and moral courage to enforce it, wherever *Protestant truth* is violated, or the conduct not in accordance with the sacredness of the office. There should not seem to be an indisposition to redress wrongs, and an apparent willingness to throw the shield of authority over delinquents. There cannot be a more dangerous position for a Church, than when the clergy are brought into collision, not only with their respective flocks, but with the sound and reflecting part of the public, by the introduction of doctrines and innovations that are strange to the eyes and ears. The skilful physician applies the remedy at the first indication of the disease, and never waits till it is beyond the reach and power of art. Wrongs not timely redressed may ultimately lead to results that will shake the walls of our Zion, and involve Church and State in a fearful crisis.

The times are already sufficiently solemn. A

cloud evidently hangs over the Church of England, while *there is no appeal made to the collective wisdom of the Church*, to explore the evil and to devise the remedy. We are fallen into evil days, when one of the subjects of discussion is not how we may best save immortal souls, but what ought to be the colour of an habiliment, and the forms of ceremonial worship. O that the Divine Spirit might revive among us the impressive exhortations of the apostle: "*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.*" "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"\* "*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season.*"†

It is thus that we might indulge the animating hope that the Church of England might be rendered one of the most efficient instruments for diffusing sound piety and religion, both at home and abroad; and that its ministers might become, under the Divine blessing, "the glory of Christ," "the messengers of the Churches," the great witness for the truths of the Reformation, the bulwark of Christendom, and the fit herald of mercy to the millions of perishing heathen.

\* 2 Tim. ii. 15—23.

† Ibid. iv. 1, 2.



## LECTURE VII.

THE RE-UNION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

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JOHN XVII. 21.

*“ That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”*

“ THAT in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him,” is the grand design of infinite love. This design has been opposed by the malice of evil spirits and the depravity of fallen man. But infinite power will accomplish what infinite love has designed ; and all things shall tend, directly or indirectly, to a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

As this is the purpose of God, so is it the subject of prophecy, and so was it the prayer of the great Intercessor, when he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. . . . And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Had there ever been that unity of faith and love among all the professed ministers of Christ, and that unity of heart and mind among all the professed disciples of Christ, the world could never have resisted such an evidence of the truth of Christianity. But this most comprehensive and wonderful prayer still waits for its answer.

But let us take a view of the mode of opposition to this glorious design. From the time those angels fell, who kept not their first estate, down to the present day, it has continued; and, through the depravity of man, it will continue till "the

mystery of God shall be finished," and the loud voice be heard in heaven saying, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Then angels and men shall be one; and the ten tribes and two tribes of Israel shall be one; and Jews and Gentiles shall be one; and the Church of Christ, in all her members, shall be one; and God and men shall be one; and the prayer of our Redeemer shall be answered.

The subject of the present lecture is, "The reunion of all the people of God." I shall therefore call your attention to—

I. *The previous Opposition to it.*

II. *The final Accomplishment of it.*

The opposition includes in it the sin of schism. This commenced among those high intelligences, who, with a derived, though dependent sufficiency, might have kept their first estate. But, conceiving, probably at the suggestion of one great leader, the possibility of independence, they withdrew their allegiance, and sinned against their Creator. Then there was *a schism among the angels of God*. What a lesson of dependence might be taught the universe by the conduct and punishment of these fallen spirits!

Another order of beings was created, in whom

Jehovah greatly delighted. This order would, in a high sense, be capable of reflecting the Divine glory. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion." Under the moral government of the Creator this order was to be tried. "And God said, Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou mayest not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."\* The tempter comes, and suggests a doubt as to the truth of this saying; or, if true, whether the threatening would be executed; and, on the contrary, that great would be the advantages of partaking of the forbidden fruit. The temptation succeeds, and the penalty is incurred. The Spirit of God is grieved; and man no longer holds communion with his Maker. Then there is *a schism in the paradise of man*.

But there were purposes of mercy towards the human race; and a Redeemer was revealed, who would restore that nature and conquer him who had led it astray. In that Redeemer it would be re-headed; and this was made known and taught to Adam's children; and Abel believes it, but Cain believes it not: and, behold, then there is a *schism in the family of man*.

\* Gen. ii. 16, 17.

Nevertheless, those “born after the Spirit” maintain their unity, till alliances were formed with those “born after the flesh;” and then *a great schism takes place in the professing Church of God.*

Again, in the world renewed in Noah we have the same history. Truth is taught, and received by the few; and unbelievingly and scornfully rejected by the many, till the world was sunk in idolatry. But God would not leave himself without witness, and Abraham is called; and the nation that proceeded from him adopted, and then the tribe, and then the family, from whom the Redeemer should spring, were pointed out. But, behold! many of them gave no credence to his word, till at length, though placed in the promised land, and brought to great prosperity, ten tribes out of twelve separate themselves, and adopt a false mode of worship. And there is *a schism in the chosen nation of God.* But Judah, though equally prone to depart, is preserved because Messiah was to come of that tribe; and in the fulness of time he appears, “full of grace and truth.” He comes “to his own, but his own receive him not.” Few are his followers. The nation will not have him to reign over them; and then comes *the great schism in the Jewish Church of God.* The believers in the Redeemer present,

however, at that time a beautiful picture of unity and love. They were “all of one heart and of one soul.” Yet soon the enemy sows tares among the wheat; and from among themselves did men arise, “speaking perverse things, and drawing away disciples after them.” Henceforward arose heresy after heresy in doctrine, and schism after schism in practice, and superstition after superstition in ceremonies, and persecution after persecution of real Christians who dared to abide by truth. And the Church in the East was overwhelmed with a flood, and the crescent waxed strong against the Cross; and the Church in the West was enveloped in darkness; and the Churches in Africa, where the eloquence of Chrysostom was heard, and the energy of Augustine was felt, were given to the foe; and few were the witnesses, as in the days of Elijah, till God in his mercy again said, “Let there be light!” and a Wickliff, and a Luther, and a Cranmer, and a Latimer, and a Calvin, and a Bucer, and other blessed Reformers, arose, and, in the spirit of truth and moderation, and piety, and zeal, endeavoured to unite the people of God. But human nature is human nature still; and weakness of judgment in some, and wickedness of heart in others, and a needless scrupulosity about things indifferent in a third, and a want of conciliation in smaller matters



in a fourth, and love of novelty, and excitement, and pride, and caprice, opposed the union of the people of God.

Reflecting on the past and present history of the Church, one is ready to exclaim, "When shall it once be?" Hitherto there has been nothing but opposition to it. Nevertheless, we have the sure word of prophecy. "There shall be one day, known to the Lord," when "there shall be one Lord, and his name one."\* And then shall this great intercessory prayer be answered, and all the disciples of Christ shall be one, as the Father and the Son are one; and the world shall believe, and worship, and adore. Hence we lead your attention to—

## II. *The final Accomplishment of it.*

Here we must walk by faith, and not by sight. If we judge by appearances, if we review the past history of mankind, if we contemplate the imperfections of the Church, we may well be discouraged. Our world hitherto has been a planet that, morally considered, has wandered from its sphere; and would have wandered in interminable darkness but for "the purpose of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." That purpose was to "gather together in one all things in Christ, and by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be

\* Zech. xiv. 7, 9.

things in earth or things in heaven." This is the grand design of infinite love ; and the means were adequate to the end. The merit of the Divine Redeemer could remove both guilt and punishment ; and the energy of the Divine Spirit could subdue human depravity and restore perfect holiness. The Divine faithfulness also is pledged that not one promise should fail, but all should come to pass. The prophecies, therefore, of Holy Writ are full of this most interesting theme. " That," says St. Peter, " which God before had spoken by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. And he will (again) send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution (or accomplishment) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."\* Then the re-union of all the people of God will take place. Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, " The tabernacle of God is with men, and God himself will be with them, and be their God." All things shall be put in subjection under Christ's feet ; and his mystical body, the Church, will sit with him on his throne, " even as he overcame and is set down with the Father on his throne." Then the second Adam, foretold in the Psalms of David, as applied in the writings of

\* Acts iii. 18, 20, 21.

St. Paul, shall have dominion.\* Then shall the Church experience undisturbed peace and everlasting joy. Then shall the world be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The darkness of Pagan idolatry, of Mahomedan imposture, of Popish superstition, and of Jewish unbelief, will have passed away. Protestant lukewarmness will have kindled into the flame of holy love, and infidelity will be constrained to cry out, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

To this the apostle may refer, while drawing a beautiful contrast between the Levitical and Evangelical dispensations. Those, under the former, came to a mountain, which, being touched, death ensued, and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which made even Moses himself to tremble; but the latter “come † to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

\* Ps. viii.; Heb. ii.; Ps. cx.; 1 Cor. xv.; Rom. v.

† “Shall come.”—Macknight.

Certainly, though believers have already come hither by faith, both as to title and earnest, yet this blessedness cannot be fully enjoyed till the period to which our subject refers. Till then, we shall not see "Jerusalem as a city in unity in itself." Till then, we shall not behold that good and pleasant sight, "Brethren dwelling together in unity." Till then, there will be that separation which re-union previously implies. Then, and then only, will the prayer receive its full and final answer, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Let us learn from this subject,

1. *To cultivate sedulously the spirit of union now.*

As it is a sin against nature for man to be the enemy of man—"Hath not one God created us?" so is it a sin against grace for Christian to hate Christian—Hath not one Lord redeemed us? Hence schism in spirit is a sin; for the heart of each should say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." The spirit of preference there must be; but there should not be the spirit of exclusion. And to lay unnecessary impediments to union, or make an unnecessary separation from a Church of Christ, in which we have the means of scriptural instruc-

tion and grace, is a sin to be confessed and deplored, and watched and prayed against, by all the true servants of the living God. "O that I could somewhere meet you both together," said Augustine to Jerome and Ruffinus, hearing of their differences, "I would fall at your feet with much love and many tears, and would beseech you for God's sake, for your own sake, and for the sake of weak Christians, not to suffer these dissensions to spread further." And thus the Church of England prays, that "all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in *unity of spirit*, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." And that God would "inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, *unity*, and concord, that all they that do confess his holy name may agree in the truth of his holy Word, and live in *unity* and godly love." And thus the holy Scriptures command, and beseech, and warn. "Let there be no divisions among you;" "I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord;" "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." How beautifully this union is illustrated by the emblem of the body and the members, "so that if one member be honoured, all the members are

honoured with it; or if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;" "There is one body, whereof we all are members; one spirit, which quickens, moves, and inspires all; one hope, or expectation of the same happiness; one Lord, who redeems, and governs, and rules; one faith in the common salvation; one baptism, or sign and seal of the covenant; one God and Father of all, whether believing Jews or Gentiles, and who is over all as supreme; with all, as taking care by his Providence; and in all, by his vital energy and grace;" therefore, should all carefully endeavour to preserve "the unity of the Spirit by the bond of peace." Such are the powerful motives by which mutual forbearance and brotherly love are enjoined. It was known that the Jewish and Gentile converts would differ as to some ceremonies. Hence the laboured arguments of the Apostle in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of his Epistle to the Romans; and these, as to their spirit, are the finer parts of our religion. But what have we seen in the professing Church of God? Instead of union, division; instead of harmony, discord; instead of love, enmity; instead of holiness, practical infidelity. Let us not wonder that it has cast a stumbling-block before the Jews, though they also had their sects. But the Church of Rome has no cause to boast of her unity, as



opposed to our divisions, when she reflects on her Jansenists and her Jesuits, her Dominicans and Franciscans. And we have no cause to envy her uniformity in a corrupted worship and submission to a false head, for division in truth is preferable to unity in error; and union without truth is a conspiracy against heaven. But all who hold the head, should sedulously cultivate the spirit of union, for true religion is of an uniting nature; and “By this,” said our blessed Lord, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;” “Yea,” says the beloved disciple, “by this we know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” If Paul and Barnabas for a moment disagree, they will soon again unite. “If we cannot reconcile all opinions, let us unite all hearts,” is a sentiment never to be forgotten. As to the Primitive Church, the very heathen acknowledged that no people ever held together, and loved one another, as the Christians. Alas! that Julian could afterwards jeer us for our divisions, and Campian make it an argument against our faith. “Pardon,” said Æcolampadius, “may be obtained for sins through faith in Christ’s blood, but our scandalous discords God will judge.” As long as the earth emits vapours, so long thunder and lightning will be in the air. We can have no serene sky. We

wonder not, therefore, at the trials or the weakness of the Church, as long as she is divided against herself. In this state she cannot appear, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners." A foreign enemy takes advantage of a distracted state of things, redoubles his assaults, and, having obtained an entrance, falls on all parties at once.

Beloved brethren, it will be well if I have not drawn a picture of the Church even at the present day. The Son of man is coming, but will he find faith on the earth? The Son of man is coming, but will he find love on the earth? The Son of man is coming, but will he find union on the earth?—the union of truth and peace? O let *us*, at least, have this oil in our lamps, and cultivate the spirit of union now. And this shall be our cheerful hope, that this prayer must eventually be answered, and that all shall be one. Therefore we are,

2. *To anticipate the re-union of all the people of God then.*

O glorious hour! Whatsoever is imperfect, sinful, or calamitous, is then gone for ever! The tempter is bound with adamant chains and cast into the bottomless pit. The people of God are raised incorruptible and immortal. There is perfect rest from sin and sorrow—a perfect rest in the service and enjoyment of God. They are

“made kings and priests, and reign over the earth.” Then the Redeemer distributes his rewards of grace “to his servants, the prophets and the saints, and those who have feared his name, both small and great;” \* and the servant who by one talent had gained ten talents, becomes ruler over ten cities; and the one who had gained five, rules over five; and a cup of cold water only, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, does “in no wise lose its reward.” And the apostles will “sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” And the saints judge angels; and Abraham becomes “heir of the world;” and the glorified Church, “heir of all things,” because “heir of God, and joint heir with Christ;” and she may be the leader and organ of Jehovah’s praise throughout the universe.

“Fain would we something say, but to what end?

Men have not eyes nor ears to understand,

The high notion and sublime mystery.”

But let me not be considered as descending in the scale of happiness, if I assert that a mutual recognition of Christian friends will be a sweet ingredient in our joy. The parent will meet the child,—“I shall go to him.” The shepherd will meet the flock,—“What is our joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of

\* Rev. v. 10; xi. 18.

our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?" The friend will meet the friend,—We "sorrow not as those without hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." We do not detract from the glory of the sun when we admire the flowers it paints, or the fruits it ripens. The Redeemer comes "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And the dead being raised, and the living changed, "They shall meet the Lord in the air, and be ever with the Lord." And each will joy in the joy of all. Then in mind, in will, in affection, in purpose, and in dominion, they shall be one, as the Father and the Son are one; and the world shall believe that our Redeemer was sent to accomplish these designs of infinite love.

Beloved brethren, are these things so? Then who are the people of God, and who shall be re-united with them? Will you not pray, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance."\* If you repent and believe the Gospel, you are introduced into this blessed society. If you "follow peace

\* Ps. cvi. 4, 5.

with all men, and holiness, you shall see the Lord." If you "watch and pray always," you shall be "accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man." If you wait for your Lord, you shall "open to him immediately." If you live in love, you shall have "boldness before him." If, in his strength, you overcome, you shall "sit with him on his throne, even as he also overcame and is set down with the Father on his throne." Lay these things to heart. Let none of you be missing in that day. And God grant you all that faith which is the confident expectation of things hoped for, and the assured conviction of things not seen. If you believe the oracles of God, you must admit, that to have been found among the people of God in time, will be the only true wisdom; to have been partakers of their grace, the only true happiness; and to have joined in their services, the only true honour. "I beseech you, therefore, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him," that you thus *practically* consider

"The re-union of all the people of God."

#### PRAYER FOR UNITY.

"O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers

we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, that, as there is but one body and one spirit and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.



## LECTURE VIII.

### THE HOPE OF THE ADVENT A REMEDY AGAINST SUPERSTITION.

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ACTS I. 11.

*“ This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”*

SUCH were the words spoken by angels to the disciples, who were gazing up into heaven after that a cloud had received Jesus out of their sight.

They contain a promise suited and intended to revive the hopes of the dejected followers of Christ. They had read in the prophets that a King should reign and prosper, and rightly believed that Jesus of Nazareth should be the King of the Jews : that the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his father David.

But when by wicked hands Christ was crucified and slain, sorrow filled their hearts, and in the language of despondency they exclaimed, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel!"

Hope, however, revived when Jesus rose from the dead, and they eagerly asked him, "Wilt thou at *this* time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The reply of Jesus checked their sanguine expectations: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power;" And almost immediately after he ascended into heaven.

But he did not leave them comfortless; for "while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so *come*, in like manner, as ye have seen him *go* into heaven."

From that moment their duty (and the duty of all who should believe through their word) became plain. It was "to wait for the Lord from heaven," and to "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In this hope the apostles lived, and taught, and

died; encouraging themselves, and the rest of the Church, by looking for, and “hasting unto the coming of the day of God.”

For that day is to bring with it not only the fulfilment of all that prophecy has spoken to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob: the good which the Lord hath spoken concerning Israel. But it shall be a time of blessing to all his Church. In that day Christ shall be a “light to lighten the Gentiles,” as well as the “glory of his people Israel.”

The return of Jesus to this earth shall be the beginning of an eternal and happy reign over the Jews upon the throne of his father David. Nor only so. But “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we [Gentiles] also shall appear with him in glory.” The dead in Christ shall be raised, and “we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we be ever with the Lord.” And this is what is meant by the “hope of the Advent.”

This is the hope constantly set before the Church in the Word of God; the hope to which it is the duty and the happiness of that Church to cling.

The Church? But what Church? Not, certainly, all who have the baptism of water, or all such as profess and call themselves Christians; but that of which we read, “Christ loved the Church,

and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; *but that it should be HOLY and without blemish.*”

The Church? It is all those who have been chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be “holy and without blame before him in love!” The Church? It is every one of those who have been, are, or shall be, born of the Spirit and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. The Church? It comprehends all justified through faith,—through faith only—not as the Romanists teach, by faith and works, or faith and baptism conjointly, but through faith only, “without the works of the law.”

This, then, is the Church. Every member of that body described as elect, regenerate, justified.

Till all whom the Father “hath chosen in Christ out of mankind” are born again and justified, the Church will not be complete. And hence it is that we pray, in one of the services of our most scriptural Prayer-book, that it may please God “to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom.”

There is, however, a more confined sense in which the Church comprehends *those only of its*

*members who are living at one time*: not an undefined body invested with an usurped authority, (which, *in practice* proves to be the clergy invested with tyranny,) but “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord: both theirs and ours.”

Upon this subject it has been well remarked by a learned and pious prelate: “The Church has been made first an *abstraction*, and then a *person*, and then a *Saviour*. The Church thus invested with divinity, has the minister as her visible representative; and he (explaining the prophetic anticipation) has assumed the *place of God*. We too well know what corruptions found entrance at this source; what opportunity was given to the exercise of the worst of human passions; what food was supplied to malice, enmity, pride, covetousness, and ambition. So that one of the first and most needful works of the Reformers was to pierce the veil, *to divest the Church of the MYSTERY in which it had been shrouded*, and to *disclose it to the world, in its true and Scriptural form AS THE COMPANY of BELIEVERS.*”\*

Such is the language of one whom we may justly style a “master in Israel.” And then he proceeds: “The *Church* is that body which had assembled in the upper chamber at Jerusalem,

\* Charge of the Bishop of Chester, 1841, p. 31.

and there received the promise of their risen and ascended Lord. The Church is that party which united together and ‘had all things common,’ and ‘continued in the apostles’ fellowship.’ The Church is *that ‘congregation of FAITHFUL MEN,’ in all ages and of all countries, who maintain in their purity the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel.*”

And this is the Church whose duty and happiness it is to hope for the Advent of the “great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

To all and every of those who *have believed* in their crucified, risen, and ascended Lord, (whatever their differences in minor points,) it may be said, for their comfort and encouragement, “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he went up into heaven.”

But the subject appointed for the present lecture specially requires that the HOPE OF THE ADVENT BE SHOWN AS A REMEDY AGAINST SUPERSTITION.

May God the Holy Ghost so bless what shall be said that we may be strengthened in unfeigned abhorrence of all that is superstitious, either in doctrine or practice, for Jesus Christ’s sake!

The subject is the *hope*, and not the mere *expectation*, of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.



Hence we are spared the painful, but very important, duty of dwelling at great length upon the destruction of that superstitious and Antichristian confederacy, the community of Rome.

The second coming of the Lord Jesus, in “flaming fire to take vengeance upon them that know not God,” is properly a subject of *terror*, and not of *hope*, to the lovers of that idolatrous system. They, alas! have nothing to *hope*, and everything to *dread*, who shall be “destroyed by the brightness of his coming!”

However willing we may be to listen to the voice of charity, and to hope that there are some of the Lord’s “chosen, called, and faithful” people, even in that unholy connexion; yet we cannot but believe (yea heartily rejoice) that the Romish system itself shall be destroyed at the coming of the Lord.

The Romish system! A system whose records pollute the page of history. A system whose superstitions have been at once the cause and the cloak of crimes almost incredible in number and blackness. A system from which have flowed all the frightful workings of fraud and cruelty and lust; of pride and ambition and blasphemy, as its natural and necessary results. A system, to use words more happily expressive than my own, “so hideous in its principles, and so mischievous

in its effects, that it well deserves to be described as having imbodyed the very *mystery of iniquity*.”\*

We wonder not that the gentle spirit of holy Archbishop Leighton was moved to unwonted severity of language when he spoke of the duty of rulers with regard to this system. “Kings,” says that meek and heavenly-minded prelate, “ought to HATE THAT RELIGION OF ROME, (which is indeed *rebellion*,) and that mother of abominations, who makes the kings of the earth drunk with her cup.”†

Little indeed can the abettors of such a system as this have to *hope* from the appearing of the Lord! And little thanks do we owe to those who would obliterate the wholesome feeling of terror and abhorrence toward Rome, once so general among ourselves: those who (as it has been felicitously observed by Episcopal authority) so conduct their labours that, “Under the pretence of deference for antiquity, and respect for primitive models, the foundations of our Protestant Church are undermined by men who dwell within her walls; and those who *sit in the Reformers’ seat are traducing the Reformation*.”‡

They can have no well grounded hope of that

\* Charge of Bishop of London, 1842, p. 59.

† Leighton on 1 Peter ii. 13, 14.

‡ Charge of Bishop of Chester, 1838, p. 2.

coming which is to usher in “the glorious liberty of the children of God,” who are bending their endeavours, by revived superstitions, to enslave the people with a spiritual despotism.

I hope (I earnestly pray) that the people of England will watch with jealousy the signs of reviving superstitions, and will have wisdom enough to resist them!

Certainly *they* have but little reason to *hope* for the coming of the Lord who would weaken the protest against Popery, which was bought with the blood of their fathers: who are willing to foster the doctrines which martyred Latimer, Hooper, and Bradford.

But there are those (and not a few such, I trust, are present at this time) whose duty and privilege it is to look for the coming of Christ with *hope*: a hope which (according to the subject assigned for this lecture) should purify their hearts from superstition.

A lively hope, a spiritual reception of the doctrine of the Second Advent, has a direct and powerful tendency to deliver the Church of Christ from all that is dreamy, unreal, and superstitious.

It will not satisfy the devotional feelings of the *enlightened and intelligent believer* to “gaze with earnestness on a cross,” put upon a table, miscalled an altar. Such an one will be looking, with the

eye of faith, for the appearing of Jesus, with *genuine* piety. And he will be very far from mistaking the enthusiasm of mere natural excitement, and mawkish sentimentality, for all that is “deep and tender and serious in devotion.”

His religion is a “reasonable service,” not depending for its existence upon music, and vestures, and architecture. The sweet voices of singing boys, the flowing robes of the priestly office, the altar duly placed toward the east—these are not the things upon which his devotion depends. Christ himself is the object of his worship, his trust, and his hope.

Rising from these lower matters of grosser superstition, and more carnal religiousness, we may proceed to observe that the *hope of the Advent* delivers the Church (or *should* deliver it) from those more subtle forms of superstition which are too commonly found in doctrines touching the *office of the clergy and the ordinances of the sanctuary*.

The Church of Christ (looking for their Lord from heaven) will not mistake their minister for their Master.

The Church will never allow that Christ has delegated to his ministers the power of conferring spiritual life at their pleasure: nor willingly suffer them to “lord it over God’s heritage.”

The Church will view the clergy in their *right character*; as the *ministers of Christ*, not as the *priests of a Church*. And will count them *faithful* ministers, when they preach “Christ crucified,” without reserve, and do not exalt themselves and the sacraments above the Lord who made them.

Ministers such as these the Church of Christ will count “worthy of all honour,” and “esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” But the “faithful in Christ Jesus” will look with alarm and distress upon worldly, or ambitious, or covetous men intruding into the ministry, and having no other claim for reverence than apostolic succession.

They may submit in silent grief to such an infliction, but they will never consent to idolize a man for his office, nor will they be ensnared by his false teaching, “for a stranger will they not follow: but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

While waiting for the coming of the Lord, the Church of Christ will *acknowledge no priest but one*, “their merciful and faithful High Priest,” who ever liveth to make intercession for them. Admirable, indeed, are the words of a prelate whose station may add weight to the force of his sentiments: “We hold,” says his Lordship, “in opposition to the Church of Rome, that the offering

of a propitiatory sacrifice to God, is *not* one of the functions and privileges of the Christian ministry. Jesus Christ *by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; and we derogate from the absolute worthiness and sufficiency of that offering, if we suppose that any supplementary sacrifices are required for the purpose of propitiation. If *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, we need no other reconciler. We *have* indeed our *sacrifice* and our *altar*; and our *priesthood* to offer the one and to minister at the other: but the sacrifice is a *spiritual* sacrifice, and the altar is *figuratively* an altar. We slay no victim, we offer no victim slain; but we *commemorate* the one great and final sacrifice, properly so called; and we continually present unto God that *memorial* with prayer and thanksgiving, and an offering of our substance and of ourselves, both soul and body.”\*

Precisely so: *no priests, but spiritual worshippers*, and *no sacrifice, but simply a “memorial” in the Supper of the Lord*. *The priesthood is spiritual and the sacrifice is figurative*.

And this may lead us further to remark that the hope of the Advent will prove a remedy for superstition, in receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

\* Charge of the Bishop of London, 1842, p. 10.



Whilst the more palpable superstition of a *bodily* presence in the bread and wine is rejected, there remains a more refined, but no less real, superstition, in the minds of some, called a “*spiritual presence*.”

Some there are who believe that, “the consecrated elements are not what they were before, and what to sight they seem :” \* words which, understood in their most inoffensive sense, imply at least a spiritual presence of Christ in the bread and wine—words, which it seems impossible to reconcile with the language of the Twenty-eighth Article of the Established Church. “The body of Christ,” says that Article, “is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. *And the MEAN whereby the body of Christ received and eaten is faith.*” FAITH not the ELEMENTS ; THESE are not the channels of the Spirit. The bread and wine contain not, either corporally or spiritually, the presence of Christ.

This Sacrament, which is called in our Homilies, “a preaching by signs,” † preaches no such superstition as this. The bread says, “He is not in *me*,” and the wine says, “He is not in *me*.” Both say, as the angel said to the women at the empty tomb, “He is not here, for he is risen : as he said.”

\* Dr. Pusey to Dr. Jelf, p. 44.

† Homilies, b. 2, Hom. 21. near the beginning.

Men, who have not the Spirit themselves: whose lives are evidently worldly, and whose affections are earthly, may affirm that they exalt the character of the Supper of the Lord by this *imaginary spiritual presence, after consecration*. It is plain, by such a doctrine, that *they exalt the claims of the clergy upon the superstitious regard of the people*. But as for receiving the Sacrament with views such as these, whatever their intentions, it is to be feared we speak not too strongly in saying, they rather prove thereby, that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Men sometimes speak in such a manner of the “Spirit and its operations, its channels and its means,” as plainly to prove to others they “know not what manner of spirit they are of.”

Is then the spiritual presence of Christ *denied* to the worthy recipient at the table of the Lord? God forbid. Christ is *always* present by his Spirit in his people there, as elsewhere. He always *was*; before he came in the flesh, before he instituted the Sacrament, and will be till he comes again in his glory.

Certainly Christ is spiritually present when his people eat bread (*mere* bread), and drink wine

(mere wine) in “memory of his death and passion,” and to “shew forth his death till he come.”

Spiritually present? No question. We *cannot deny* to that “most comfortable Sacrament,” what we allow to private prayer, the communion of the saints, the public worship of the sanctuary, and the devout reading of his Word! I admit, I *maintain* that he is spiritually present with all those who, being born again of the Spirit, receive that Sacrament with faith.

What I *deny* is, that there is any scriptural authority for saying that our Lord is present with his people at the Lord’s Supper in any other *manner* than he is present with them when met together in his name; and what I *affirm* is, that the body and blood of Christ are “verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper,” just as they are verily and indeed taken and received by them *whenever at other times they exercise faith in his atoning sacrifice*. So that to teach men to believe any bodily presence, or *any other presence effected by the consecration of the elements*, is without the warrant of God’s Word. In a word, it is a part of that superstition from which the Church of Christ should be delivered by the hope of the Second Advent.

And what is the PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION to be gathered from the subject?

1. The first practical suggestion is, "*Set your affection,*" or, as it is in the margin, "*Set your mind on things above,*" where "*Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not on things on the earth.*"

It is for want of this that the Christianity (as they call it) of many men becomes mere superstition. The name of Christ is in their system, but Christ himself is not in their hearts by faith. Hence they become a prey to the devices of Satan, who fills their minds and wastes their hours with superstitious doctrines and empty ceremonies. Satan sets them thinking and talking about the *Church* in such a way as to lead them far from Christ. He teaches them to seek grace at the hands of the Church, justification from her sacraments, and pardon from her priests. And thus immortal souls are deluded and destroyed! Imagining themselves members of the mystical body of Christ they perish as members of the synagogue of Satan.

Awful the guilt, terrible the responsibility of those who have solemnly vowed to use "*all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word,*"\* and then break their vows, by causing the people to err, and destroying those that are led by them!

But this will not excuse the guilt of their

\* Ordination Service of bishops and of priests, or presbyters.

victims, who, neglecting to test the truth of the preaching by the Word of God, suffer themselves to be misled by culpable ignorance.

“But we hope better things of you, beloved, though we thus speak, and things that accompany salvation;” being persuaded, that (from *this* place at least) “*ye* have not so learned Christ.” To you, then, the text calls to set your affections on things above; it tells you to be “looking unto Jesus.” It reminds you “that your life is hid with Christ in God,” and that, “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

2. The second practical suggestion which the subject affords to the Church is, *To pray for those whose religion is mere superstition.*

However firm and strenuous our opposition to error, we shall have little reason for expecting to do good, if we cherish not a spirit of kindness and compassion for the “*people who are sitting in darkness and have no light.*” And whose case often becomes the more pitiable, because they say “We see.”

Whatever be the advantages in this life attached to the position of such characters, they are not to be viewed with any other feeling than that of compassion!

To hear them dilate upon spiritual things with no other success than to expose their spiritual ignorance, ought not to provoke the smile of contempt but the tear of pity.

If the Lord in his sovereignty has indeed caused us to differ, and given us to know the things which belong to our peace, we shall not view with unconcern the approaching doom of these men; but pray God if perhaps he will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

3. A third and concluding suggestion which occurs, is *To make the hope of the Advent, in all respects, a practical subject.*

It is painful to hear the flippant manner in which *some* (who give no very hopeful sign of preparation) venture to speak of the speedy coming of Christ.

Those, whose Evangelical attainments reach no farther than the conventional language of a party, or admiration for an eloquent preacher, can have but little cause to rejoice in the near approach of the Advent, however *interested they may say they feel in sermons which prove "the Lord is at hand!"*

Their presumptuous boast of enlightened views (coupled with their worldly hearts and inconsistent



walk) will avail them no more in the day of the Lord than the midnight darkness of the most superstitious.

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.” Show by your deadness to the world, by crucifying the “flesh with its affections and lusts,” by fruitfulness in good works, that you are seriously waiting for the blessedness of that servant who shall be found so doing. Do this, and then “lift up your heads with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh.” “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

In *that* day you shall bid an eternal farewell to sorrow, temptation, and sin. In *that* day, when the formal, the superstitious, the insincere, the proud, and the profane shall be consigned to their own place, you shall “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Whilst to others the study of prophecy of the coming of Christ is a matter of mere intellectual amusement or of speculative inquiry, to you (my beloved in Christ) it may well be a subject full of heartfelt joy and hope.

Rejoice, therefore, in hope of the glory of God ;

and yet “be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord;” “behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain.” “Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!”

## LECTURE IX.

### THE HOPE OF THE ADVENT A REMEDY AGAINST UNBELIEF.

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HEBREWS XI. 1.

*“ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,  
the evidence of things not seen.”*

FEW things discover more plainly the depth to which man has fallen than his darkened and defective views of the nature of sin. If there were no other proof, this alone would show that he is “very far gone from original righteousness.” No longer are God’s thoughts his thoughts, and God’s ways his ways: for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God’s ways higher than his ways, and God’s thoughts than his thoughts.

How widely different are the thoughts of God

and men relative to the sin of unbelief. Unbelief is scarcely recognised by the world as having a place in the catalogue of moral offences. If a man be honest and honourable towards his equals—amiable in his family—affable to his inferiors—and benevolent to the poor, he has attained to a high point in the world's standard of excellence. While in the account of God that man may be guilty of a sin of the very first magnitude—the sin of unbelief—that sin which God has stamped with the brand of his most awful displeasure; for “he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Men may think lightly of unbelief; not so the Word of God. There we are told that it pours the highest contempt upon God; for it “makes him a liar;” and “it departs from the living God.” It calls down the most appalling judgments upon man. It excluded the Israelites from Canaan; “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” It deprived the people of Nazareth of much of their Saviour's presence, and of the manifestation of their Saviour's power; “he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.” It even mingled words of rebuke with the joyful greeting of the risen Saviour; “he upbraided them because of their unbelief.” And if we ask, wherefore have the natural branches been stripped from God's olive-tree, and scattered, and peeled over the face

of the earth, we receive for answer, "Because of unbelief they were broken off." In a word, unbelief was the source and spring of man's first disobedience; he believed the devil's lie in preference to God's truth: and if all the polluted streams that have flowed from that fountain head could be analysed, one invariable component would be found to be unbelief. Hence our Lord, describing the operation of the Holy Ghost, upon the hearts of men, said, "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they *believe not* on me."\* As if unbelief were the prolific root from which all the branches and fruits of sin derive their existence.

The design of the present lecture is to show that "the hope of the advent is a remedy against unbelief." And if, (as by God's help we trust,) we are able to establish this position, then the oft-repeated, but oft-refuted, objection, that prophetic studies are destitute of practical influence, will be once more disproved. What can possess greater claims to practical influence than a truth which not merely assails this or that particular branch of sin, but aims a blow at the very root?

May that glorious Saviour, for whose coming and kingdom we are taught to look, and who has already received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, assist us with his effectual blessing!

\* John xvi. 8, 9.

In the present stage of these lectures it will not be necessary to define “the Hope of the Advent.” It will suffice to say, it is *the scriptural expectation, cherished with an earnest desire of its fulfilment, that our Lord will come again—we know not how soon—to take to him his great power and to reign.* Upon this tree for the healing of the nations grow fruits of various kinds, such as the resurrection of the just, the rapture of living saints, the redemption and renewal of the body. And we presume that they who sit under the shadow of this tree find the fruit also sweet to their taste. They hope for the Lord’s coming; and they hope for the glories which are connected with his coming.

With reference to the unbelief which this hope is to counteract, it must be premised that we mean unbelief in converted Christians. Unbelief may be regarded in a twofold point of view, according as it exists in the converted or in the unconverted heart. In the latter, unbelief holds undivided, undisputed, sway; whereas in the converted, faith is an essential and indispensable principle—conversion consisting in repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Still the possession of faith does not imply the absence of all unbelief. On this point the Christian’s experience cannot be better described than in the words of that prayer, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”



It is unbelief in the converted to which our subject leads us. A remedy will avail only where it is made use of: and none but converted Christians can really make use of the hope of the Advent. They only cherish this hope; they only endeavour to realize it; consequently they only can find it to be a remedy against sin.

I have but one more prefatory remark. Faith being the gift of God, the only real and radical remedy against unbelief is the Holy Spirit's grace. But in the bestowal of this grace God is pleased often to make use of means; or, rather, he has commanded us to make use of means in seeking it. We hold that one means is cherishing the blessed hope of our Saviour's coming again in glory.

We now proceed to prove this. To this end let us take—

I. Some of the CAUSES whence unbelief arises; and,

II. Some of the FORMS which it assumes; showing, as we go along, how the Hope of the Advent is calculated to check the one, and to correct the other.

1. Unbelief, then, may arise from *doubting the meaning of God's promises*. What, we would ask, is so likely to produce a general spirit of unbelief as indistinct and indefinite conceptions of the meaning of that large proportion of promises

which bear upon the Second Advent. We are told in the text that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But if the things hoped for and unseen possess no substance—if they present no clear, distinct, and defined meaning, how can we entertain a firm conviction of their reality? In proportion as our conception of the meaning of God's promises is confused and undefined, so will our faith be feeble and faltering. Nor can it be said in answer that this may be the case in reference to promises connected with the Second Advent, but why should it apply to other portions of God's Word? If we encourage, or even allow, doubts concerning one branch of revelation, we open the door to unbelief respecting others also. The habit of a doubtful and indistinct reception of truth, allowed upon one point, will speedily extend, and undermine the general stability of our faith; and hence will arise the evil we deprecate.

The remedy for this evil is the Hope of the Advent. For if faith be the substance of things hoped for, surely the clearer our conception of the things for which we hope, the stronger will be our faith. If faith be the evidence of things not seen, the more the unseen things take root, and grow in the heart, the less room will there be for the springing of unbelief. The question therefore

resolves itself into this, "What are the things hoped for, and not seen, which are to be substantiated and evidenced to the mind?" For an answer let us refer to the preceding context, where it will be seen that the great truth proposed in this passage as the *object of faith* is that declared in chap. x. ver. 37, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." It was this announcement of the Second Advent as the object of faith which led the apostle to give the general definition of faith set forth in the text, and then to illustrate and establish that general definition by numerous instances from Old Testament history. Connect, then, this general definition of faith with the foregoing statement of the Second Advent, which drew it from the apostle's pen; and the conclusion is obvious, that the things hoped for, and not seen, are connected with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. His coming is the thing hoped for by the Church; as the apostle reminds Titus, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The revelation of his glory is the thing not seen. "We see not yet all things put under him." But though not seen as yet, it shall be seen hereafter; for "the Father hath put all things in subjection under his feet."\*

\* Heb. ii. 8.

Let, then, this hope of a Saviour's coming be received in all the plainness and simplicity with which it is propounded. Let the unseen things of a Saviour's glory assume that distinct and definite form in which they are presented in the Word of God, and they will become the sustenance of a vigorous and lively faith; the antidote of a sickly and unsettled state of unbelief.

2. Unbelief may arise not only from doubting, but from *misunderstanding* the meaning of the promises.

To illustrate this, we find in Scripture numerous promises of great earthly prosperity to the people of God. Take, for instance, Isaiah lxx. 21, 22: "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

Now there is, even in sincere Christians, a natural proneness to expect a certain measure of present ease and earthly enjoyment from the service of Christ. It is the very same disposition which showed itself so repeatedly in our Saviour's disciples. The desire of a present portion, and an earthly inheritance, was not confined to the fishermen on the Galilean lake. It is indigenous to the soil of every human heart. Under the influence

of this natural feeling, the Christian may be led to appropriate promises connected with millennial blessedness, and to build upon them his own airy structures of present *earthly* happiness. What follows? Hopes and expectations based upon a misapplication of Scripture sooner or later fail. Faith in God's Word receives a shock; and a measure of unbelief is thus insensibly generated.

The doctrine of the Second Advent provides a remedy. It teaches us to distinguish between the character of this dispensation, and of that which is to succeed the Lord's appearing. It leads to a clearer perception that the present portion of God's children is spiritual blessing combined with earthly tribulation. *Here* "we suffer with Jesus;" *hereafter* "we shall reign with him." Looking for glory only when Christ is glorified upon earth, and expecting tribulation as long as Christ is dishonoured upon earth, we are guarded from misunderstanding and misapplying those promises which hold out great earthly prosperity to the people of God. Not that these views of the present dispensation make us question our heavenly Father's love, or doubt the largeness of his bounty. Already "he *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."\* But, for that promised peace, prosperity, and universal

\* Ephes. i. 3.

prevalence of the love and fear of the Lord in the earth, we cannot see that it is foretold, or that it is to be expected, until our Saviour comes again in glory. Possessing this clue to the general character of this dispensation, we are preserved from drawing from the Word of God present expectations, which that Word, when rightly understood, does not justify. Cherishing this hope of the glory that shall be revealed, we are also prepared for the mortifications, crosses, and afflictions, which meet us in our pilgrimage. We are "not greatly moved;" because our expectation is from him for whose coming, kingdom, and glory, we are taught to look. We build the structure of our hopes, not upon the shifting sands of present happiness, but upon the solid rock of the promise of God, that "*when his glory shall be revealed*, we also shall be glad with exceeding joy." Therefore, when afflictions overtake us, we are not so much surprised or disappointed. The rains may descend, the floods come, and the winds blow, but our house will not fall; our hope will not fail us; our faith will not be shaken. It is the mistaking the purposes of God which occasions disappointment; and disappointment in turn produces unbelief. But if the Saviour's Advent be our hope there can be no disappointment, for "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."



3. Again, the evil we are combating may arise from supposing the heavenly inheritance to be *distant*. Unbelief may spring, not from uncertainty, but from the supposed distance or delay of the thing promised. The wicked servant said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming;" he regarded the event as distant, and then followed practical unbelief. "He began to eat and to drink, and be drunken:" and at last he had his portion with the unbelievers.

But cherish the hope of the Lord's coming again, and the event can no longer appear distant to the eye of faith; for it is the peculiarity of the doctrine of the Second Advent, that we are directed always to regard that event as near at hand. The lapse of time has indeed proved that nearly eighteen centuries were to intervene between the apostolic age and the Saviour's Advent; but even in those early days the inspired writers exhorted Christians to regard the Advent as soon to take place. From the day that the Lord Jesus ascended, and angels announced to his astonished disciples, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," the Second Advent has been the one chief object on which the Church has been taught to set her hopes. For this she is

bidden to look ; for this she is to long ; unto this she is to hasten. And the effect of thus looking, longing, and hasting, is the establishment of our faith. “ Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” And purity of heart, as it springs from faith, so in turn it reproduces faith.

It may be said, in objection, that the expectation of death will be an equally effective remedy against unbelief. But where, we ask, are we exhorted to look, and to long, and to hasten unto death ? If, moreover, as is often the case, we be in possession of health, and strength, and vigour, we may talk of the nearness of death, but we too often act as if its approach were very far removed. Perhaps nothing shows more plainly the difference between speculative and practical belief than this very thing. Every one expects to die, but how many act as if they would live for ever. And though we do not here include converted Christians, yet even with them the expectation of death fails under ordinary circumstances to produce much practical effect ; and, we believe, for this reason, death is not set forth in the Word of God as an object to be desired, and sought, and prayed for. Death comes in consequence of the curse ; the Saviour comes that there may be no more curse—

no more death; hence we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And prayer giving nearness to the promises, represses unbelief.

4. Further, unbelief may be occasioned by *disregarding* the inheritance.

Blessed and glorious as the prospect of heaven is, it is a mournful fact, that with many the ear grows tired of hearing of it. And though the joyful sound cannot weary spiritually-minded Christians, yet, from its failing to present any very distinct or defined ideas, the hope of heaven does not exert that influence upon their hearts which they themselves could desire. The things of this present world, on the other hand, are distinct and defined, and near at hand; and from this cause they too often obtain an undue influence. Whence is it that so many, even among professing Christians, become immersed in worldly pursuits; entangled in extravagant speculations,—joining house to house, and field to field,—exhibiting such an undue anxiety about their position and appearance in the world? It is from the working of practical unbelief;—that unbelief which disregards the promised inheritance.

Again we have recourse to the hope of our Lord's appearing. This hope presents the promised inheritance in a real and substantial form, as an object to engage our pursuit. It brings it

very near within the reach of faith. It gives life and form and energy to things unseen; opening, as it were, the graves, and bringing up out of the graves promises which lie upon the field of holy Scripture, like the bones in the open valley, very dead and very dry. It lays sinews upon them, and brings up flesh upon them; covers them with skin, and puts breath into them so that they live and stand up an exceeding great army,—an army, mighty through God to resist those fleshly lusts which war against the soul: yea, “to beat them small as the dust before the wind; to cast them out as the dirt in the streets.” (Ps. xviii. 42.)

We shall find that earthly objects cease to interest, worldly pursuits fail to attract, in proportion as the things hoped for obtain a plain and palpable subsistence in the mind. Thus the doctrine under notice operates as a check to that practical unbelief, which, disregarding the inheritance, “savours not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

5. To name but one more source of unbelief. It may arise from *despising* the promises. Thus it is written of the Israelites who entered not into Canaan, “Yea, they *despised* the pleasant land, they *believed* not his word.”\*

It may possibly be questioned, whether a sincere

\* Ps. cvi. 24.

Christian *can*, in any measure, *despise* God's promises. But this we know for certain, that he can despise God's chastisements, or why should he be cautioned, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord?" And he can despise the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, or why should the Christians of Thessalonica be warned, "Despise not prophesyings?" Now, if sincere Christians can despise the dispensations of God's providence, and the possession of spiritual gifts, both of which are present to them here, how much more is it possible to despise promises, the accomplishment of which is future, and to be enjoyed hereafter? No Christian will *deliberately* despise the heavenly inheritance. But what he will not do deliberately, he too often does insensibly. He practically undervalues the things not seen, and eternal. And to the extent that he despises heavenly things, he gives encouragement to a spirit of unbelief.

We shall find a corrective in the Hope of the Advent. Where that hope lives in the heart it is not a bare and barren speculation; it leads the soul to dwell much, and to delight much, in the glories in which the believer will then participate. Bringing home many a rich cluster from the land of promise, it spreads them before the mind in such an engaging light, that they can hardly be

despised. Can the assurance be lightly valued, that “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory;”\* “we shall be like him; we shall see him as he is;”† “He shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body?”‡ We shall either be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; or if we have slept in Jesus, we shall be brought with him, when he comes “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”§

These and many other glorious expectations are connected with the Hope of the Second Advent—expectations in which the believer has a personal and individual interest. Where this hope is really cherished, the soul delights to count over its treasures; to single and sort out its jewels; to hold them up and admire them one by one; and thus to form a more correct estimate of their worth. Whereas, if they be only looked at, as they lie in a confused heap under the vague and indistinct idea of heaven, their value, exceeding great and precious as it is, may be comparatively despised.

So far, then, the Hope of the Advent has been shown to be a remedy against the *causes* of unbelief. It preserves us from doubting, and from misunderstanding, the meaning of the promises of

\* Col. iii. 4.

† 1 John iii. 2.

‡ Phil. iii. 21.

§ 1 Thess. iv. 14, 17; 2 Thess. i. 10.



God; from treating them as distant; from disregarding them; and from despising them.

II. Having thus examined the *causes*, we advance a step farther, and consider some of the *forms* in which unbelief may be exhibited: still endeavouring to show that the hope of which we speak is one great scriptural remedy to check the progress of this spiritual malady.

1. One of the most fatal forms in which unbelief is seen is in *drawing back*. This may be gathered from the words immediately preceding the text. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."\* To believe is, therefore, the antidote to drawing back, and, on the other hand, drawing back is the effect of unbelief. We do not regard this passage as involving a denial of that most blessed truth, that believers, born of God, cannot finally draw back and be lost for ever. God has promised, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." And He is faithful that promised. Without, then, giving countenance to the unscriptural notion that any one, born of God, can finally fall away, (for they that draw back unto perdition were

\* Heb. x. 39.

never born of God; their apostasy affords the most conclusive and convincing proof that the incorruptible seed was never lodged in their hearts;) yet we should be guilty of corrupting the Word of God if we did not derive from this solemn passage a warning to ourselves, to see that our faith is indeed the faith of God's elect—that faith which, being the gift of God and the work of his Spirit, will neither fail us in time of temptation, nor suffer us finally to draw back unto perdition.

Having thus guarded against misapprehension of the passage, we may deduce from it this instruction: that the tendency of unbelief is to make the Christian so far draw back, as to lag and loiter on his heavenward path,—to linger and look back at the things that are behind. And though by grace preserved from that daring and deliberate desire to return to the city of destruction, which proved fatal to Lot's wife, yet his spiritual powers are for a time paralyzed: he becomes almost as cold and stiff and motionless, in the things of God, as the pillar of salt amidst the cities of the plain.

Observe, then, in the passage to which I have adverted (Heb. x. 35), how the apostle deals with those concerning whom he feared lest they should draw back through unbelief: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." Thus he exhorts them not to

yield to unbelief; and this exhortation is afterwards followed up with the Hope of the Advent: "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

The hope, thus proposed to others, the apostle cherished himself; and he experienced its stimulating influence. His well-known words to the Philippians are, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Ask you what that prize was,—the hope of which thus strengthened his faith, and stimulated his ardent zeal? It was the prize to be awarded at the Lord's appearing. Hear him describe it to Timothy: employing the same metaphor of the race, he says, "I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." It was the hope of the Lord's appearing, and the crown to be then received, which made him run with such ardour the race set before him; he neither flagged nor faltered through unbelief, strengthened and stimulated by this hope of the prize.

2. Another mode in which unbelief exhibits itself is that of *impatience*. That the tendency of unbelief or distrust is to produce impatience may

be seen in several of the characters of Scripture. Take, for instance, Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Unwilling to tarry till the Lord should visit her, she must have a child at once by Hagar, rather than patiently wait for her own promised Isaac. Delay occasioned unbelief: unbelief induced impatience. So the conduct of Saul, king of Israel, shows how distrust begets impatience. Because Samuel came not at the appointed time, Saul's faith failed; and then, through impatience, he transgressed the commandment of God. "As for this Moses," said the unbelieving Israelites, "we know not what is become of him." Whence the impatient demand: "Make us gods to go before us." These instances prove that impatience is but a form of unbelief.

If, then, it is important,—if it is indispensable that we should add to other graces patience,—that we should be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience,—that we should run with patience in order to obtain the prize,—if, in one word, "*we have need of patience*," then should we cherish the Hope of the Advent: for this hope is a scriptural check to impatience. Thus the Apostle James exhorts, "Be patient, brethren, *unto the coming* of the Lord." And again, "Be ye therefore patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The influence of this hope in producing patience, and so lopping off one of the branches of unbelief, may be farther gathered from the words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: "He thanks God for their work of faith, and labour of love, and *patience of hope* in the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. i. 3.) The precise nature of this hope in the Lord Jesus Christ may be learned from the close of the chapter, where he reminds these Christians how they had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to *wait for his Son from heaven.*" The waiting for the Son of God from heaven is thus shown to be the subject of their hope, and its influence is very plainly declared; for as the expression, "work of faith," means work that proceeded from faith; and "labour of love," labour that proceeded from love; so their "patience of hope" signifies the patience that proceeded from hope. In other words, the hope of the Lord's coming produced patience. Hope has a natural tendency to make us patient. The hope of enjoying the fruits of the earth in due season, induces the husbandman to plough and sow, and endure with much patience the labours of the field. And shall it not produce patience in a believer's bosom to hope for that harvest of glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, which, in "His times he shall show, who is the

blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”\* Surely nothing will tend more to check unbelieving impatience than looking forward with lively hope to that event, which the Word of God sets forth as the termination of all our sorrows, the time of recompence of all our sufferings.

3. Undue *depression* under affliction is another form of unbelief. “All these things are against me,” exclaimed the afflicted patriarch; whereas, had faith been in lively exercise, he would rather have said, “Our light affliction which endureth but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.” With a Christian it is not merely the affliction, but the weakness of his faith in affliction that occasions such depression. Be the draught of sorrow never so bitter, lively faith can sweeten it from the cup of God’s love. Whereas unbelief tastes nothing but the wormwood and the gall. Faith looks upward, and in the darkest cloud discerns the bow of promise; while to the eye of unbelief, intent upon the earth, all seems enveloped in gloom and darkness.

Now it is the province of the hope we are

\* 1 Tim. vi. 15.



advocating to raise the dejected spirit; to invite the sorrowing soul to look upward and onward to the promises in store; and to perceive more clearly for what purpose affliction is appointed. Thus St. Peter offers the balm of consolation to those who were “in heaviness through manifold temptations,” reminding them of the purpose for which their afflictions were sent—“that the trial of their faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, *at the appearing* of Jesus Christ.” And again (in a passage that may recall to our minds the conduct of him who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, *because* he had respect unto the recompence of the reward), St. Peter urges the afflicted to look onward, saying, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as if some strange thing happened unto you; but rather rejoice; inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that *when his glory shall be revealed*, ye also may rejoice with exceeding joy.” In these passages of St. Peter, the appearing of Jesus Christ and the revelation of his glory are proposed as the corrective of undue depression.

But we have other authority than that of the apostle. Our Saviour himself, in his last affecting

conversation with his disciples, employs this hope as a check to their unbelief and excessive sorrow. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." And then having declared for what purpose he was about to leave them, he adds, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."\* Thus his return in glory is proposed as the antidote to their unbelieving fears, "Strengthen ye the weak hands," says the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah, "confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your *God will come* with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will *come* and save you."

This hope of his coming is the secret spring of joy in tribulation—"We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and this, not merely when we are at ease, and in peace, "but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." And this hope of the glory of God, to be revealed in Christ Jesus, at his appearing, is a check to unbelief; by setting before us the limit of our sorrows and afflictions; by supplying an explanation of that mysterious providence which often spares the wicked and smites the righteous; by assuring us that yet a little while, and "Behold, the

\* John xiv. 1. 3.

tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

4. Another form under which unbelief is exhibited (and it is the last we shall name), is that of spiritual *drowsiness* and *slumber*. That unbelief shows itself thus is evident from what St. Paul says of the Jews. In the same chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which he declares that they were broken off because of unbelief, he describes their state in the language of the Prophet Isaiah, "God hath poured upon them the spirit of slumber." Nor are we to suppose from this that spiritual slumber and drowsiness are dangers which attach only to the unconverted. "While the bridegroom tarried they *all* slumbered and slept," wise as well as foolish. Hence, in the same Epistle, St. Paul warns even *Christians* that "now it is high time to awake out of sleep." Mark, then, the consideration by which this warning is enforced, "*For* now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, *the day* is at hand." In exact harmony with which the Thessalonians are exhorted, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness;

that that day (from the context, “the day of the Lord”) should overtake you as a thief.” “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.”\*

In these passages we have both the disease and the remedy. The disease, that spiritual drowsiness, from which even the people of God are in danger: the remedy is declared to be the watchful expectation of the day of the Saviour’s Advent. What was it that broke the slumber of the virgins in the parable? It was the cry, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.” In other words, the setting forth the Hope of the Advent is the means ordained of God for rousing the Church from the drowsiness of unbelief, and for preparing her to take her stand as a virgin in readiness for the Bridegroom’s appearing.

The frequency with which this motive to watchfulness and prayer is inculcated in the New Testament must be familiar to every one. “Watch therefore,” is our Lord’s oft-repeated injunction, “*for* ye know neither the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh.” And again, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Thus the keeping in view our Saviour’s coming

\* 1 Thess. v. 4—6.

is conducive to watchfulness and prayer; habits, which, of all others, are the most effectual preservatives against unbelief. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning: and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately: Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.”

We have thus considered some of the forms in which unbelief shows itself. In drawing back—in impatience—in undue depression—and in spiritual drowsiness. Whether, therefore, we regard the causes from which this evil arises or the forms in which it is developed, the blessed hope of our Lord’s glorious Advent is an efficacious remedy, as well for its prevention as for its cure.

Need we, then, in conclusion, say more to commend this branch of Divine truth to your attentive regard. If, beloved brethren, “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved you, even when you were dead in sins, hath quickened you together with Christ;” if, by his Holy Spirit working upon your hearts, He hath called you to the knowledge of his grace and faith in him; you have not to be told what value to assign to a remedy against unbelief. A remedy will be prized in proportion as we know the conse-

quences of the malady it counteracts. Know you the consequences of unbelief? Death and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, are its consequences upon the unconverted. To such the Lord's Advent can be no subject of hope; seeing He will "come in flaming fire; to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." To such the subject of this evening has not addressed itself; but we would say to all, as the apostle said even to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling"—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." See that your faith is "the faith of God's elect;" that it stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; that it consists not of a mere assent to these, and other truths; but that it is a living principle inwrought by the Holy Ghost. The faith which receives "Christ in you, the hope of glory," which purifies the heart, works by love, overcomes the world, and waits for the Son of God from heaven; believing that he *hath* delivered us from the wrath to come.

If, through sovereign mercy, you have obtained this precious faith, give God all the glory, and take to yourselves the comfort that He who has been



the “ Author of this faith ” will be its “ finisher ; ” “ He who hath begun this good work will carry it on to the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. ” Unbelief cannot destroy you. But may it not distress you ? Yes ; if you are born of God you know that, as far as unbelief prevails, it brings darkness of soul, and distance from God ; it deprives you of spiritual comfort, and indisposes you for active exertion in the service of your Master. At all times, and under all circumstances, a remedy against unbelief must be valuable.

But as the day approaches, that value will increase tenfold. The times which precede our Lord’s appearing will be times of great peril and general perplexity. “ Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming on the earth. ” “ There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. ” And what will preserve the very elect from being deceived ? What will keep them from being drawn away into the error of the wicked ? The power of God, *through* the operation of faith. “ They will be kept by the power of God, *through faith*, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. ” If, then, under ordinary troubles Christians need the support and strength which this hope has been shown to admi-

nister, how much more will it be required in those days of approaching tribulation and unparalleled distress for which it becomes us to be prepared?

Do you, then, brethren, under present trials—do you, in the prospect of impending tribulation, pray, “Lord, increase our faith?” Cherish, we entreat you, the Hope of the Advent. But we cannot urge too frequently, or insist too forcibly, that it is the *hope*, not the mere expectation of the Advent, from which this practical influence proceeds.

Be yours the hope which arises from earnest desire—“earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” The hope which is accompanied with love—hope “makes not ashamed, *because* the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” The hope which yearns with longing expectation—“We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;” but which yet endures with long-suffering patience; “hoping for that we see not, we do with *patience wait* for it.” Such is the hope you must cherish, if you would possess a remedy against unbelief. Let it engage, nay, let it engross all the powers and affections of your mind; and may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into patient waiting for Christ!

## LECTURE X.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MERCY, NATIONAL DUTIES  
IN THE PROSPECT OF CHRIST'S COMING AND  
KINGDOM.

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BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,

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DANIEL IV. 27.

*“ Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”*

THE second coming of Christ is not merely a doctrine needful and profitable for our personal edification as private Christians, but it has also a most important connexion with the duties of nations at large. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. To him rulers and governors have to give

account for the maxims of their government in all their relations to time and eternity. How very different is the view of national duty when thus realized to any view that merely regards earthly and temporary considerations. Parliaments, Senates, and Statesmen have a Supreme Governor, who will shortly summon all to his bar of judgment, and all their measures, laws and statutes, will be revised at his judgment seat, whose approval, whose condemnation, infallibly righteous, final, irreversible, and everlasting, will be found to be the one judgment, mainly to be regarded, and of supreme importance.

Nebuchadnezzar was an example on this subject. The wonderful vision which he had interpreted by the Prophet Daniel, is full of abiding instruction. He was told, *Thou, O King, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.* As monarch of the first universal empire he had all power and might, and was full of ambition and pride. This brought upon him his merited punishment, and upon that followed his repentance, and then his restoration. His debasement is that of

all governments, when they shall rule for their own glory, and not the glory of Christ.

In the fourth chapter of Daniel, we have Nebuchadnezzar's full acknowledgment and public confession of his sin, in not knowing that the Most High ruled in the kingdom of men, closing with praises to God for his restoration. It is a decree published to all people, nations, and languages that dwell upon all the earth. It belongs to all, and God has secured its widest publication, by directing his beloved servant Daniel to include it in the inspired writings of his own Word. There is reason to think it a typical history of the recovery of the nations of the earth from all their idolatries to the worship and service of God at the return of our Lord and Saviour. It is full of seasonable, suitable, and practical instruction to us now.

The advice of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, given in the prospect of severe judgments, was, *Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* This advice applies to nations now in the prospect of the Lord's return to judge the earth, and take vengeance on his proud and rebellious creatures. It directs governments to the only safe course, for the welfare of the country over which they rule.

God's judgments, if they be not finally averted, may be delayed by repentance, as we see in the case of Nineveh. There may be *a lengthening of our tranquillity*; or if that be impossible, through general national iniquity, there will, at any rate, be a deliverance of our own souls.

In this advice of Daniel we may observe a two-fold duty, like the two tables of the law; sins against God are to be broken off by righteousness, and iniquities against man, by shewing mercy to the poor.

The Lord graciously assist us with his Holy Spirit, and enable me, with faithful love, to lay before you this truly important subject committed to me on this occasion,—OUR NATIONAL DUTY IN THE PROSPECT OF CHRIST'S COMING AND KINGDOM. Let us consider,

I. National duties towards God.

II. National duties towards men.

III. The motive to these duties in the prospect of the Lord's coming.

## I. NATIONAL DUTIES TOWARDS GOD.

Every part of God's Word may shew us that such duties exist. If nations, as such, are capable of engagements towards each other, they must be capable of duties and obligations towards God himself. If they nationally confess their obligations



to God, and fulfil them, they are religious and blessed ; if they reject and deny them as nations, they are under a curse for their ungodliness.

This is a most important principle to be insisted upon at this time, when we are exposed to two opposite evils ; either a blind submission to corrupt authorities seeking to bring us into bondage by mere self-righteous formalism on the one hand ; or the contrast evil, the lawless rejection of human authority.

The absolute duty of monarchs and nations to give their royal and national support to the truth as it is in Jesus, is clearly revealed in the Word of God, and is the very foundation of the British Constitution, fully laid at the glorious Reformation, and distinctly manifested at every fresh coronation of our monarchs. It is predicted of the Redeemer, that he *shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne.* It is equally a rejection of his rights to deny or withhold his supremacy, either in ecclesiastical or in civil legislature and government. Very clearly has our British Constitution announced this, when the archbishop says to the monarch at the coronation, “ Remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer. For he is the Prince of the Kings of the earth,

King of kings, and Lord of lords ; so that no man can reign happily who derives not his authority from him, and directs not all his actions according to his laws." There can be no neutrality on this question. To profess neutrality respecting the supreme authority of Christ and his Word in legislation and government is to number ourselves with his avowed enemies. In short, all power in heaven and earth is given to our Lord Jesus Christ, is distributed by him as he pleases, is derived from him, and is to be used for him according to his revealed will. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* Until Christianity is made the law of the land in every kingdom, and the law of the heart in every human being, his just rights are withheld ; he is rebelliously kept out of his proper kingdom ; he is defrauded of his own inheritance. In an heraldry that cannot err, in the heraldry of heaven, he is *King of kings and Lord of lords.* However any one whatever, monarch, priest, prince, or people, may have refused submission to his authority, or have usurped that authority, or resisted it in those to whom he has given it, he will speedily appear, bring all unto judgment, and destroy those who have rebelled against him. He will now soon return in his glory, reward those faithful to him, and sit on his throne, the acknow-

ledged Monarch of the whole earth. All kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall serve him.\* Vain is it, under the pretence of allegiance to the head of the Church, and of Christian liberty, to refuse submission, in things lawful, to the powers that be and are ordained of God. Equally vain is it, under pretence of submission to the powers that be, to yield to corrupt authorities that entire subjection which is only due to the Lord of all, and his clearly revealed will. He has charged us to obey God rather than man, and, in obeying man, to have chief regard to His supreme authority, as contained in His word. His Word, therefore, is the only sure light to our paths, the only safe lamp to our feet.

In considering our national duties towards God, let us guard, then, against opposite dangers.

National duties are many ; we will notice some of the principal.

### 1. NATIONAL WORSHIP.

The nation which acknowledges the faith of Christ, should unitedly, under its monarch or rulers, and as a part of its whole system of action, publicly worship God, and openly acknowledge the dependence of the nation on Him. Such national worship was rendered by the kings of

\* See this clearly and well stated in " Crosthwaite's Sermon on the Establishment of Christianity," pp. 113 and 114.

Israel in their solemn feasts. It was given by Nebuchadnezzar on his repentance, and by Daniel in behalf of his people before their restoration. It is also promised that such national worship shall take place in the times of the Gospel. *Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.* (Isa. xlix. 7.) It is promised yet more distinctly and fully, in times to come, *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth.* (Ps. cxxxviii. 4.) *All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.* (Ps. lxxii. 11.) *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee.* (Isa. xlix. 23.) *The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.* (Isa. lx. 10.)

This duty is implied in the titles given to Christ. *He is God over all, blessed for ever*; he is *the Prince of the kings of the earth*; he is *King of kings and Lord of lords*. Reasonable is it, then, that the united worship of governments and nations should be rendered to him who *has a name given him above every name*; that at the name of Jesus

*every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This duty is also the dictate of natural conscience: to receive blessings without number, as a nation, and to return no public national united thankfulness, is a base ingratitude.

Hence we find that ungodly rulers have justly and rightly been punished, and their kingdoms with them. Pharaoh disdainfully asked, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* Thus he hardened his heart; and his people concurring with him, this casting-off the Lord brought down upon his kingdom the destructive plagues of Egypt. So Belshazzar lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven, and he and his servants praised their idols. Daniel solemnly warned him of the common danger of falling kingdoms: *The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.* And in that night Belshazzar was slain, and his kingdom overthrown. May we as a nation be warned by such examples of the danger of casting off God in our public measures.

Great is the beauty and glory of the united worship of a nation. In the Old Testament we may often see this. Look at the inauguration

of Solomon by his father David. In that magnificent assembly of all Israel, David blessed the Lord with the most glowing praises, and called all the congregation of Israel to bless the Lord, and they united together in worship and sacrifices. In the dedication of the temple by Solomon we behold a similar sublime and holy meeting and general worship of the nation, and God marking his approval of it by manifesting his glory in the midst of it. Similar national worship distinguished the reigns of other pious kings. Thus the examples of faithful rulers illustrate and confirm the great duty of national worship.

True it is, that there are now real difficulties in the way of general, harmonious, and united worship. But the only hindrances arise from sin, religious divisions, foul superstition, and hateful ungodliness, to be withstood and resisted by those to whom God has committed his authority, in wisdom and forbearance, with firmness in necessary things, liberty in things not necessary, and charity in all things. However the evils may increase the difficulty, they never can reverse the duty.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the great Monarch of all, with supreme wisdom and infinite power, is coming to take account of the stewardship that he has intrusted to each. Oh, how great the hate-



fulness, How besotted the folly of indifference to the national worship of God, when placed in the light of his speedy coming, and his infallible judgment!

## 2. RIGHTEOUS LAWS.

This is a vast subject, in which we can but glance at some general principles. The law of God, as given in his Word, is the true fountain of political wisdom. It requires, indeed, that we should discern things that differ. We have to distinguish the circumstances peculiar to the early age of the world, and the political state of the Jews, from those great principles of moral and social duty, and that essential nature of social happiness, which are of universal force. With this modification, the direction given to Israel is equally applicable to us. *Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and shall say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* (Deut. iv. 6, 7.)

To neglect the law of God in human legislation is impiety, and to seek happiness in the contradiction of its maxims, is folly and madness. There

is, alas! much of this impiety and folly in modern legislation, on all the great subjects of crime and commerce, morality, and social interests and happiness.

How little yet has the nation at large, or even the ministers of the Word, risen to a due estimate of the value of the divine law, as a great guide in legislation. There is Divine wisdom in the maxims of righteous laws taught us in the Word of God. The punishment of murder was strictly required in the death of the murderer. No laws of human honour justifying duelling will plead in the bar of the Divine law at the coming judgment. There was to be a firm repression of crime between man and man, and of blasphemy against God. No pretence of constitutional liberty will justify our allowance of open blasphemy in that day. The sense of national union was based on the fear of God, and the religious education of the young. No differences of religious opinions will clear us of national guilt, if this be neglected. God gave many safeguards against oppression, and the unbounded accumulation of property. His laws fostered simplicity in bodily and personal wants, and high and noble efforts for national holiness. They taught men to honour the rulers and judges placed over them, and to seek their happiness not in things without them, but in the inward state of

their own minds, and in the favour of God. Had such principles regulated our legislation in general, and imbued our country at large, Britain would have been, far more than it is, a *holy nation, fearing God and working righteousness*.

But in contradiction to this, there is a relaxing of righteous laws on one hand, and, on the other, a spirit of lawlessness that endeavours to throw contempt on the authority of law, and the decisions of justice, by constituted authorities. True it is that we must obey God rather than man, whatever human authorities determine; but we must not make our own rebellious will our idol; we must not speak evil of dignities, nor be presumptuous and self-willed. We must yield neither to corrupt authorities on the one hand, nor to lawlessness on the other, but simply, entirely, and unreservedly, yield to the Lord our God and his revealed will. Contrast evils, in all ages, try the Church of God. Thus the primitive Church had as equally to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, as of that of the Sadducees. Another national duty is—

### 3. THE CONFESSION AND DIFFUSION OF TRUTH.

Nebuchadnezzar, in this very decree, says, *I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his*

*dominion is from generation to generation. I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol the King of heaven.* This is the true and safe position of a faithful monarch before God. Every monarch restored to a sound state of mind in the sight of God, as Nebuchadnezzar was, will thus openly and faithfully confess and diffuse the truth of God.

This is the duty of every monarch, and of every government. It is a very superficial objection to say that *their* heathen governments must therefore propagate heathenism, and idolaters diffuse idolatry. The clear answer to this objection is, that it is the duty of rulers first to learn the truth. Here God has never left himself without witness, in the constant goodness of his Providence, to those really seeking after him. Having sought and attained the truth, their duty is then to promote it with all the influence of their station, and by all the means which the nature of that truth allows. In a country where the Word of God is open to all, truth is attainable to every faithful reader of that Word, or else the Gospel is a mockery and a dream. All men are responsible to God for using the means of attaining his truth; and much more are rulers, and governors, and nations, acting in their national capacity, seeing that such vast consequences hang upon their due performance of this duty. Hence pious kings are commended for

using their power and influence to promote religion. Pious Asa reforms abuses in religion. (2 Chron. xiv. 2—4; xv. 8.) Pious Jehoshaphat commands the priests and Levites to teach the law of the Lord, and the judges to reform abuses. (2 Chron. xvii. 7—9; xix. 4—11.) Pious Hezekiah takes counsel with the princes to celebrate the Passover (2 Chron. xxx. 2), and appoints the courses of the priests (2 Chron. xxxi. 2), and pious Josiah takes an oath of the people to keep the law (2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3); and these acts are their true glory, and are recorded in the Word for the instruction and pattern of all monarchs to whom God has given the knowledge and the love of his truth.

Thus responsible are governments for confessing before others, and diffusing that precious light of Divine truth, which they have received. It is a talent entrusted to them, and if they employ it not, they are like that evil servant who hid his talent in a napkin, and received so decided a condemnation from his Lord. Excuses may be multiplied before men, but no excuse against the performance of so clear a duty will avail in the presence of Christ.

All this, at this time, is eminently true of the British nation, exalted in Christian privilege, wealth, and enlarged dominion, as it is above other

nations. Its prominence in the eye of the world is peculiar, its means of knowledge abundant, its means of diffusing that knowledge are immense, and the preciousness of the souls which we may now benefit is infinite.

Here again, then, we have brought before us our deep national guilt. Our worldliness, our ambition, and our religious differences, are the great hindrance to this duty; and these things are our sin and our shame. Oh, that God may give us grace each duly to weigh, as in his sight, the severe account to be hereafter given for any share in this guilt; and, most of all, may it please the Lord to grant grace to legislators and governors in the State, and to rulers, ministers, and teachers in the Church, deeply to consider their personal responsibility for the national neglect of this duty.

There are two great sources of the evil. On the one hand, heartless indifference to Divine truth, and, on the other hand, idolising of outward forms, and ceremonial or ecclesiastical distinctions. These sins are to be broken off by righteousness; attaining through the Word and the Spirit of God a right state of mind and heart in his sight, and then doing that which He in his Word has called us to do; in short, to believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, to confess him before men, and to keep his commandments, which are, supreme love to God, and unfeigned love to



man. This is the righteousness to which He calls us. Nothing else will save us or our country from ruin. Love to the truth, love to all who hold the truth, united and national zeal for the promotion of the truth,—these would be good and bright tokens of England's safety and prosperity. A nation which accounts proselytism to the truth as a sin, has apostatised from its duty and its highest glory. The salt has then lost its savour, and it is good for nothing in God's sight but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.

## II. NATIONAL DUTIES TOWARDS MEN.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was guilty of two evils. He was an ambitious conqueror, full of pride; and he was careless of the welfare of the poor. These two evils beset kingdoms that have been successful in war, and have extended dominion, such as the leading kingdoms of Europe at this time.

Two important national duties towards our fellow-men—the repression of warlike ambition, and mercy to the poor—are thus suggested.

### 1. THE REPRESSION OF WARLIKE AMBITION.

This is taught by the emblem of the wild beasts. It shews us one grand sin of the nations, and the

character in which it is viewed by the Lord of all ; as a ravenous, untamed, destructive beast, bringing death and misery where it prevails. The history of the world is full of illustrations of these evils of warlike ambition.\*

What fruits of unspeakable misery, for instance, attended the progress of the wars of the French Revolution. What tremendous guilt was incurred by those who occasioned these wars.

The true aim of government in any country should be to repress its inward evils, and promote self-denial, union, love, and holiness. Its object should be the subjugation of party, of oppression, of rebellion, and of crime ; while it is firm, united, and valiant against external enemies.

Oh, my brethren, we have, as a nation, here much to learn. We are proud and vain-glorious ; we are lifted up with our victories, and our subjugated countries, and our wide-spread dominions. Conquest is as dangerous as it is alluring. It

\* Well does Milton describe it—

“ To overcome in battle, and subdue  
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
Of human glory ; and for glory done  
Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,  
Patrons of mankind, Gods, and sons of Gods,  
Destroyers, rightlier called, and plagues of men.”

—*Book xi.*

deceives even religious minds, under the idea of the good that may be done in the countries to be subdued. We are not justified in *doing evil that good may come*. If we adopt this maxim, even under devout phraseology, our *damnation is just*. The whole principle of the Gospel, the very character of God himself, in the dispensation under which we live, is, *not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good*. Let us as a Christian nation first duly occupy the field which the Lord has already given to us. Every step in conquest is an awful responsibility. Every death in an unjust war is murder in God's sight, as much as that which is perpetrated by an assassin. The chief guilt, indeed, in such wars is not upon the soldiers, but first on the Statesmen who prompt and determine on the aggressions, and next on the people who applaud and approve the successful issue of them.

Would that our own country were guiltless here. Amidst every palliation, and with every disposition to view things in the best light, is there not the voice of our brothers' blood crying against us through our vast dominions? No past cruelty and oppression is forgotten of God; all the cruelties of the slave-trade and of slavery live in his sight. Africa, at this moment, in its chief kingdom, is agonized with that slavery and slave-trade which

we in past days greatly and chiefly maintained.\* Every unjustifiable war and conquest, with all its blood-shedding, is now before the eyes of the Lord, as at the very time in which they took place. Our extended colonies through the earth bear with them the still living record of each sin of ambition, covetousness, and oppression, defiling the nation in the way in which they were acquired. Fearful instances of the abuse of power in our dealings with foreign nations abound. The opium trade with China has been so conducted as to be a fearful national crime. Think of a dreadful war, in which it is said from 25,000 to 30,000 have perished! Think of our arms pioneering the way for an unchristian and most mercenary traffic, and to force poison on a heathen nation! Our warlike ambition has now given security to the trade. It is not a moral, it is not a respectable, it is not in China a legitimate trade; but it is a lucrative one; and from two to three millions of profits annually are wrung by the East India Company from the tears and the blood of China. Where was there ever a moral question more clear than this? And yet one noble-minded Christian has been deserted by almost all men, even those who make a profession of religion,

\* See East's "Western Africa," for many affecting proofs of this. See also the Rev. G. P. Hill's "Fifty days on board a Slave Vessel."

as well as those who do not, and has had to contend in vain in his place in Parliament, to have this iniquitous traffic put down. An eye-witness of the trade writes to me, "None but those who have really witnessed its effects, as I have done for years, can know the misery, crime, disease, despair, and death, which follow in its train. The present state of this most abominable traffic is sowing the seed of future wars. This mass of guilt which cleaves to our Christian name and country, must be removed by true repentance, and the united voice of religious men through our land must be raised against this flood of poison with which the cursed thirst for wealth is desolating unhappy China; otherwise, the long-desired opening there will be only an opening for vice and cruelty, and disease, in its most appalling forms. Let us cleanse our hands from this foul stain. No man is exempt from this duty. It is the business of all. Our country's sin is our country's danger; for what danger is more imminent than the incurring of God's wrath, by iniquities committed for the sake of filthy lucre?"\*

\* My friend, the Rev. E. B. Squire, who has been in China, has at my request furnished me with the following statement on this subject:—

"This national sin of the opium trade with China, which does not meet the eye so prominently as many others, because of the distance from which we are removed from the scene, is

Take another fact. The North American Indians, which occupied the different parts of not the less a source of incalculable misery and inconceivable wretchedness inflicted by our so-called Christian land upon a heathen people. It is a contraband trash: China rejects it altogether; and, therefore, even if it were not a deleterious drug, yet it would be attended with all the disgraceful and cruel scenes which ever accompany smuggling. But China has made it death for her subjects to trade in it, and not unfrequently have Europeans seen the extreme penalty of the law enforced; (three men's heads were exhibited at Macao, while I resided there, upon pikes; over this disgusting spectacle was written the nature of their crime, dealing in opium with foreign barbarians;) but it is a most pernicious and intoxicating drug. I have witnessed at Singapore, where there is no concealment, and where any person may enter an opium shop, every grade of madness, and such scenes as find no parallel on earth. Its use is attended with a world of moral and physical evil, prostration of body and of every energy; the intellectual powers of the mind are destroyed, and man becomes a willing slave to the worst species of intoxication; in short, pain, poverty, crime, disease, despair, and death,—all this is implied in the single word opium-smoking. And whence is this curse inflicted on this unhappy people, this pestilence which has raged and still rages with amazingly increasing virulence during the past thirty years? We reply, from India, from that land which God committed in his providence to our fostering care, that we might be a blessing to it, and that our influence for good might be extended to other lands of the East, and His kingdom and glory advanced. How are the mighty fallen! At this moment are the heathen of our East Indian possessions engaged in preparing this flowing poison from their best lands, that it may, under the auspices of our Government, and countrymen, and fellow-subjects, inundate the mighty Empire of China, to the extent



North America, at the time of its first settlement by the Anglo-Americans, numbered more than fourteen millions; they have been reduced since that time, and undoubtedly in consequence of that settlement, to something less than two millions. Of these it is said, as they exist at present, "there may be 400,000 or 500,000 in their primitive state, and a million and a-half that may be said to be semi-civilized, and contending with the sophistry of white men, while they are swallowing their

of from 35,000 to 40,000 chests per annum, from which, as it is a monopoly, a gain of from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 sterling is derived. It is the great obstacle to the introduction of the Gospel, as every missionary and right-thinking man has testified; it has been the cause of a war, in which it is said 20,000 or 30,000 have perished, yet could such a war, by its continuance, have put a stop to the opium trade, it would have been a mercy to China to have continued it, the misery of the former, tremendous as it was, among such a populous nation, being incomparably less than the latter. The amount in value of opium introduced into China and the Straits, in 1837, was 4,800,000*l.*, being 300,000*l.* more than the whole amount expended in travelling and conveyance of passengers and luggage upon the railroads of Great Britain last year, according to the returns made; and if we take the strength of the male population of China at seventy-two millions, that is those between twenty and sixty years of age, who consume the drug, we can prove that if fifteen grains a-day—every day—are used by each individual, it will require 7,200,000, or one in ten, to consume this quantity. If you enlarge the dose, then you oblige a larger individual consumption; if you think it too large, then you extend the number of consumers."

poisons, and yielding their lands and their lives to the superior tact and cunning of their merciless cajolers." Among these, all along the frontier, the conduct of those called Christians, has presented the greatest hindrance to the progress of Christianity. There, by the introduction of ardent spirits, with every sort of fraud and abuse that could be engendered and visited upon them, and among their families, by ingenious money-making men, the most deadly and thwarting prejudices have been occasioned. Thus, under a burning sense of injustice, they have withstood the introduction of Christianity, and everything which virtuous society has attempted to teach them.\* English American Christians have to answer for all this depopulation, and for all this aversion to the Gospel.

Oh, my brethren, we are *a sinful nation, and a people laden with iniquity*. We have been very guilty before God for our warlike ambition. A severe account will yet be exacted of all our national wrongs and iniquities, should we not break them off by righteousness. Let us often think of the holiness and meekness and humility of the great Judge, when he was on earth. He who refused with abhorrence the proffered empire

\* See Catlin's "North American Indians," vol. ii. pp. 238—244.

of Satan, at the cost of homage to that enemy of God and man, is coming to judge our unrighteous acquisitions of its kingdoms. He who withdrew when they sought by force to make Him king, will bring to his bar all the campaigns of proud ambition. Many that are esteemed now highly among men, will undoubtedly be found abomination in his sight in that quickly coming day.

Yet—for there are errors on all sides—let not any take up an unscriptural view of all wars. We do not, we dare not, assert, that all war is in itself sinful. We see by the Old Testament, we see by the New, that war will continue till the Lord of Glory returns, and establish, by the last war, his own peaceful and happy kingdom. We see that officers and soldiers are not commanded to leave their calling, but to glorify God in it; and we are distinctly told that *the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain*. Yet all war, on one side or the other, must be sinful; and too many wars on both sides are altogether sinful. The final decision is at hand. May the Lord himself bring us as a nation to true repentance of our fondly cherished ambition of military glory, and love of conquest and national aggrandizement.

Our position as a civilized and powerful and military nation, bordering everywhere on uncivilized, weak, and helpless nations, is a fearful

snare to us. We are not to be excused or deterred from a righteous and merciful course by the iniquities of other nations. It may appear satisfactory before a human tribunal, but before God it will not avail, for a Christian nation to say, that we cannot act upon abstract principles when we have to deal with barbarous or wicked people. The glory of Britain, possessing the Word of God, and professing to believe it to be from Him, should be that it is altogether upright, just and true, merciful, faithful, and kind in its national dealings. No doubt we must have discernment of things that differ, and be wise as serpents; but still we ought to be unexceptionably *blameless and harmless, without rebuke in the midst of crooked and perverse nations, shining as lights in the world*. To depart from our own faithfulness to treaties on grounds of mere worldly policy, to make moral integrity subject to any principles of expediency, is to dishonour the Gospel, and taint the national faith. Moral and Christian principles in a Christian Government ought to preside over and govern, begin and end all our transactions. Alas! far has this been from our course. It is true of us, as it was of Israel of old, *when they entered unto the heathen whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. O Lord, turn thou us unto*

*thee, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.*

## 2. MERCY TO THE POOR.

This duty to our fellow-men is specially insisted upon by Daniel, *break off thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor*; and, indeed, a very large proportion of the precepts of the Word of God bear upon this duty.

Oh, my brethren, what is our own situation before God? Miserable offenders in his sight, through innumerable transgressions; we are under infinite obligation to the Divine mercy that spares, that pardons, that favours, and that blesses us. By this very mercy, so freely manifested to us in Christ Jesus, God calls us to this high standing and glory, to be, like himself, partakers of his own character, to be merciful as he is merciful, to delight in doing good, in compassion, in acts of grace and loving-kindness. But what has been our real conduct?

Greatly have we, as a nation, sinned by our trading covetousness on the one hand, and by our ambition on the other. The spirit of commercial selfishness is, to treat men as machines; the spirit of military glory is, to adopt the sentiment of Buonaparte, and to regard them as food for the cannon. The spirit of true religion is to view them as immortal beings, whose life and welfare are

precious in the sight of God. Both the Law and the Gospel call us to this. *The weightier matters of the Law are judgment, mercy, and faith ; and the Gospel teaches us to put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies and kindness, to shew mercy with cheerfulness, and to be merciful, as our Father in heaven is merciful.*

It is the duty of the nation and of its Government to see that the poor are not neglected. *Thus saith the Lord God; Let it suffice you, O Princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people.* (Ezek. xlv. 9.) The direction given to kings is, *Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.* (Prov. xxxi. 8, 9.) Magistrates are required of God to *defend the poor and fatherless: and do justice to the afflicted and the needy.* (Psalm lxxxii. 3.) *Mercy and truth preserve the King, and his throne is upholden by mercy.* (Prov. xx. 28.) It is dangerous to neglect this duty. *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he will cry himself, and shall not be heard.* (Prov. xxi. 13.) Peculiar blessings are also promised to those who attend to this duty. (Isa. lviii. 10, 11.)

Seeing, then, it is so important a duty, let us



more particularly notice iniquities that abound amongst us, contrary to this law of love.

1. OPPRESSIVE LABOUR. The law of God here is explicit. *Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.* (Zech. vii. 9, 10.) *Execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord.* (Ezek. xlv. 9.) *Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.* (Jer. xxii. 13.) *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want.* (Prov. xxii. 16.) *Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.* (Prov. xxii. 22, 23.) *Undo the heavy burthens; let the oppressed go free; break every yoke. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning.* (Isa. lviii. 6, 8.) The exacting of oppressive labour from the Israelites, brought down all the destructive plagues upon the Egyptians. The children of Israel *sighed by reason of their bondage, and their cry came up*

unto God by reason of the bondage. (Exod. ii. 23.) The cause of God's judgments on Babylon of old was similar : *Thou didst shew them no mercy ; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.* (Isa. xlvii. 6.) The transgressions of Israel were of a like character : *In the days of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.* (Isa. lviii. 3.) There is much of this sin in Britain, which it is in the power of a Christian Legislature to remedy. The ways in which the poor are stinted in their wages, in which young men and young women are worked in trades and shops, and children in the mines, and women and children in the factories and elsewhere, bring an awful amount of guilt on this sinful nation. Equally so does the establishment of systems of trade, which wring out of the muscles and sinews all that can possibly be gained, reckless of the sacrifice of the health and morals of those from whom it is gained ; or which prefer female labour because it may be had at a lower rate, though it be to the entire destruction of all family happiness. The low wages, also, of the agricultural poor reduce them to the greatest shifts and distresses in providing decent clothing, lodging, and necessary food for their families. The destitution of vast multitudes in this great metropolis is its reproach and its fearful danger. Oh have we not

reason to fear lest it be said of London, of Manchester, of Leeds, and of other large towns in our country, as it was of Jerusalem of old, *This is the city to be visited. She is wholly oppression in the midst of her?* (Jer. vi. 6.) \*

#### DEFRAUDING THE POOR OF THEIR HIRE.

Very plainly the Lord speaks on this subject: *Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.* (Lev. xix. 13.) *What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord of hosts?* (Isa. iii. 15.) *Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his*

\* By an appeal from that excellent Institution the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest (20, Great Marlborough-street and Brompton), it appears that upwards of 11,000 persons are constantly wasting away under the attacks of this lingering disease, and, it is added, "that many, very many, of these poor sufferers are the acknowledged victims of unventilated workshops, ill-constructed dwellings, vitiated atmosphere, *long hours of work*, and the want of open places for exercise and recreation, so that they may fairly claim from their richer brethren, not sympathy only, but compensation, for the injury which their neglect has inflicted on them."

*heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.* (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.) God threatens in another place, *To come near unto judgment, and to be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right.* (Mal. iii. 5.) He marks this as the sin of the last times, *Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.* (James v. 3, 4.) Innumerable are the methods in the modern systems of vehement competition in trade, of injuring others and robbing the poor because they are unable to resist it. The truck system was an organized fraud on their wages. The systematic planning of such vile frauds specially incurs the Divine sentence, *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people.* (Isa. x. 1, 2.) How ought all men to look well unto their concerns with fear and trembling, lest there should be any such frauds upon the poor, seeing that there is nothing which more surely brings

down the wrath of Almighty God. It is an awful thing to become rich with the spoil of the poor. (Isa. iii. 14.)

#### NEGLECT OF THEIR BODILY WANTS.

How merciful is the law of God upon this subject. *The poor shall never cease out of the land : therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deut. xv. 11.) If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down ; for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin ; wherein shall he sleep ? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious. (Exod. xxii. 26, 27.) No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge. (Deut. xxiv. 6.) Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this : To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, and be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit ? (James i. 27 ; ii. 15, 16.)* Such are the regulations of the Divine goodness ; but how contrary to all this is the wretched and neglected situation of the poor ; disregarded, and unvisited

and uncared for, as it regards real self-denial and self-sacrifice by their wealthy neighbours.

We deny not the privileges of rank and station; let none grudge those comforts and blessings of wealth which may lawfully be enjoyed, and that even to the benefit, in a thousand ways, of the poor. Let none imagine that a voluntary poverty is a necessary Christian duty, or that the Gospel is a leveller of the distinctions of social life. Lawless liberty and equality are the cries of democracy, and the precursors of national ruin. But the constant streamings forth of Christian love are equally the duty, the safety, and the happiness of wealth. Oh, how beautiful, how full of blessings are the regulations of the Gospel. *I mean not*, says the Apostle, to the rich Corinthians, *that other men be eased and ye burdened; but by an equality, that now, at this time, your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.* That the superabundance of one part of the Christian commonwealth is ever to be flowing to the deficiencies of another, and in the constant changes of providence, there is no part, however now in abundance, that will not, at some time, stand in need of the help of another part. This



beautiful law of Christian love is far too much disregarded. Are we not carelessly ignorant of the difficulties and distresses of the poor? Are we not too self-indulgent?

It is awful to think of what the eye of the merciful God beholds in the nearest vicinity. The wretched and destitute poor perishing in want in miserable and crowded garrets, or rooms, or cellars, close by the most splendid squares and stately mansions. He sees in the same neighbourhood splendid houses, furnished with every costly luxury, and hovels with the scantiest possible supplies of clothing, bedding, or furniture, in narrow streets, and narrower courts and alleys, full of wretchedness and of wickedness, unventilated, undrained, filled with stagnant infection, spreading sickness and death. Families crowded together in small rooms, so that all decency and moral feelings are outraged. Oh, my brethren, these things ought not to be so. May God raise amongst us, by the excess of the evil, a real zeal to shew mercy to the poor.

#### UNCONCERN FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL WELFARE.

The whole spirit of our holy religion is to give us an earnest desire for the spiritual welfare of others, and to make this a primary duty. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* (Lev. xix. 17.) *He that winneth*

*souls is wise.* (Prov. xi. 30.) *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* (1 John iii. 17.)

We know, from our Saviour's example, that real compassion will chiefly regard the wants of the soul. To gather together these vast multitudes, that wealth may be accumulated by their labours, and to make no provision for their spiritual wants; to witness with indifference their having no opportunity for public worship, and no care for Sabbath blessings, or the Christian education of their children; to make no provision for church-room, or for Christian schools, is a fearful national sin in the sight of God. Masters are bound to *give unto their servants that which is just and equal*, for their souls, as well as for their bodies. (Col. iv. 1.) *If any provide not for his own,—he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* (1 Tim. v. 8.) True Christians are, wherever situated, to be *the salt of the earth, and the light of the world*. Is it, then, without national sin, that, in the midst of this most favoured metropolis of Christendom, and in our largest manufacturing towns and most populous districts, there are hundreds of thousands that have never heard the word of Christ, and with the present state of things around them, cannot hear it? Is it without national guilt that

they never attend public worship, and, with the present inadequate places of worship, could not possibly be accommodated, if they did attend?

#### DENIAL OF THE AIDS OF LAW AGAINST PREVALENT WRONG.

The very design of law and government is to correct what is wrong, and to protect the weak and helpless. It is a national sin that such measures as were introduced by a Christian nobleman, who has gained the hearts of British Christians, ten years since, for the relief of children and of females, were refused and set aside.\*

\* I cannot forbear giving some extracts, as given in the *Standard*, of Lord Ashley's thrilling speech on Friday, March 15, 1844. May the facts deeply sink into the hearts of Christians:—"Lord Ashley quoted the evidence of many of the inspectors of factories, which showed that the tendency of late legislation was to substitute more and more female labour and that of children for male labour. In one instance which had been reported to him, in 1831, one mill employed seventy adults, with 104 spindles each, and 304 piecers. The same mill in 1841 employed only twenty-six adults, with 223 spindles to each, while the number of piecers was 123, certainly showing a decrease in the number of piecers, but then the number of spindles which they had to attend was greatly increased. The Noble Lord then cited evidence to the same effect, in regard to mills in various parts of the country, all showing the same result—viz., the diminution of adult males employed in factories, and the increase of labour in the case of females and children. The effect of all was such that many mill-owners who deplored the system, still were compelled to fall in with it, or consent to be driven from the employment of their capi-

To this moment, while grateful for every progress towards what is right, we have to mourn

tal by excessive competition. He could assure the House, that to his knowledge many most respectable mill-owners were in favour of a law which would restrict female and infant labour to ten hours per day. The Noble Lord then read the evidence of many surgeons, which proved that the excessive labour to which females were subjected in mills was most injurious to them in parturition—most unnatural and very prejudicial to health; that their infants at birth were much below the average size, and in a score of children they could point out all those whose maternal parent had been a factory worker. The children were in most cases, shortly after birth, given into the care of others, while the mothers went to the factory, and the evidence proved that the consumption of Godfrey's cordial, and other poisonous drugs, for the purpose of quieting the children, greatly exceeded the belief of any one not acquainted with the facts. The mothers being deprived of their children while nature was at work, their milk became too abundant and therefore bad—internal disorders were the consequence, the usual remedy for which was gin. Ulcerated legs, arising from varicose veins, was the natural result of such long-standing at work, and the attempts to procure abortion, even among married women, were frightfully frequent. In addition to the evidence of the surgeons, he had had the personal testimony of many women who were employed in factories fully confirming all the facts. Many of the married women stated with shame that they were wholly ignorant of any domestic duties; that they were compelled to be dirty, untidy; could not cook, take care of their children, or in fact, do anything for themselves or the comfort of their husbands; in fact, both married and single affirmed that leaving home at five o'clock in the morning, and not returning until eight in the evening—sometimes much later, they in

that adequate measures to restrain and correct the evils have not been provided. God Almighty, in

fact knew nothing but 'mill and bed.' The Noble Lord then quoted Dr. John's and other authority, to show that the system tended much to debase the morals of the factory population, and that the long hours they were compelled to work was the great cause of the inebriety which existed among them. He had letters from Stockport and Manchester, from surgeons there, telling him of the various mischievous consequences arising to modest women, employed in factories, from not being able to avail themselves of those opportunities which every man could understand without his stating them. Doubtless, in many mills which were well regulated, those inconveniences did not exist, but the vast majority of them were so ill-managed as not to entitle them to exemption from this charge. He had a letter from Mr. Rayner, a medical officer of Stockport, saying, 'It has been the practice in mills gradually to dispense with the labour of males, but particularly grown-up men, so that the burden of maintaining the family has rested almost exclusively on the wife and children, while the men have had to stay at home and look after household affairs, or ramble about the streets unemployed.' Females now not only occupied the places of the men, but adopted those various associations, amusements, and privileges which were considered exclusively suited to men. They had now associations called female clubs, of which he had this description from an eye-witness:—'Fifty or sixty females, married and single, form themselves into clubs, ostensibly for protection, but in fact they meet to drink, sing, and smoke; they use, it is stated, the lowest, most brutal, and most disgusting language imaginable.' Here was a dialogue in one of them, from an ear-witness:—'A man came into one of these club-rooms with a child in his arms: "Come, lass," said he, addressing one of the women, "come home, for I cannot

his tender mercy to suffering thousands, graciously disposes those in power, to aid in this. These

keep this bairn quiet, and the other I have left crying at home." "I won't go home, idle devil," she replied, "I have thee to keep and the bairns too, and if I can't get a pint of ale quietly, it is tiresome; this is only the second pint that Bess and me have had between us; thou may sup if thou likes, and sit thee down, but I won't go home yet." See how effectually women occupied the place of men. By imposing on women the duty and privilege of supporting their husbands and families, you introduced disorder, insubordination, and violence of every description. What was the ground on which the women did not acknowledge the respect and obedience that were due to their husbands? Because the duty of providing for them no longer devolved on their husbands. The same thing took place with respect to children. The insubordination of children towards their parents was most frightful in the manufacturing districts; children taking the same advantage of parents that women did of their husbands, frequently using oaths and harsh language, and if corrected turning round and saying, with an oath, 'We have you to keep. You have no right to interfere. Without our labour and assistance you would not live.' And this was said by children under thirteen or fourteen years of age. One poor woman stated that her husband had chided two of their daughters for going to a public-house; he made it worse, for they would not come home again, stating 'they had their father to keep, and they would not be dictated to by him.' Then eight out of ten of the prostitutes in many localities were factory girls, discharged from the mills. The females in those districts exhibited a ferocity of character quite unsuited to their sex. Recollect what females did in the outbreak of 1842. This was the statement made by a mother of children working in a factory:—'She told me that all the churches and chapels



are not party questions. They are great and grave subjects of national interest and righteousness,

were useless places, and so was all the talk about education, since the young and old were unable to attend either in consequence of the former being imprisoned in the mills so many hours, and being in want of rest the little time they are at home, and the latter being compelled to live out of the small earnings of their children, and cannot get clothing, so they never think of going to churches or chapels.' She added, 'when you get up to London, tell them we'll turn out the next time (meaning the women), and let the soldiers fire on us if they dare; and depend upon it, there will be a break out, and a right one, if that House of Commons don't alter things, for they can alter if they will, by taking mothers and daughters out of the factories, and send the men and big lads in.' What was the opinion of Sir Charles Shaw, the Superintendent of the Police of Manchester, as to the influence of factory labour on the condition of the female sex. 'A woman,' said Sir Charles Shaw, 'by being employed in a factory, loses the station ordained her by Providence, and becomes similar to the female followers of an army, wearing the garb of women, but actuated by the worst passions of men. The women are the leaders and excitors of the young men to violence in every riot and outbreak in the manufacturing districts, and the language they indulge in is of a horrid description; while they are themselves demoralized, and contaminate all that comes within their reach.' Let me remind, too, the House, of the mighty change that has taken place among the opponents to this question—when I first brought it forward in 1833, I could scarcely number a dozen masters on my side, I now count them by hundreds—we have had, from the West Riding of Yorkshire, a petition signed by 300 mill-owners, praying for a limitation of labour to ten hours in the day. Some of the best names in Lancashire openly support me. I have letters

and of moral and religious obligation ; and till the Law speaks clearly and fully on such subjects of

from others who secretly wish me well, but hesitate to proclaim their adherence ; and even among the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, I may boast of many firm and efficient friends. Sir, under all aspects in which it can be viewed, this system of things must be abrogated or restrained—it affects the internal tranquillity of those vast provinces, and all relations between employer and employed—it forms a perpetual grievance, and ever comes uppermost among their complaints in all times of difficulty and discontent. It disturbs the order of nature, and the rights of labouring men, by ejecting the males from the workshop, and filling their places by females, who are thus withdrawn from all their domestic duties, and exposed to insufferable toil at half the wages that would be assigned to males for the support of their families. It affects—nay more, it absolutely annihilates, all the arrangements and provisions of domestic economy—thrift and management are altogether impossible ; had they twice the amount of their present wages, they would be but slightly benefited. Every thing runs to waste ; the house and children are deserted ; the wife can do nothing for her husband and family ; she can neither cook, wash, repair clothes, or take charge of the infants ; all must be paid for out of her scanty earnings, and, after all, most imperfectly done. Dirt, discomfort, ignorance, recklessness, are the portion of such households ; the wife has no time for learning in her youth, and none for practice in her riper age ; the females are most unequal to the duties of the men in the factories, and all things go to rack and ruin, because the men can discharge at home no one of the especial duties that Providence has assigned to the females. Why need I detain the House by a specification of these injurious results ? They will find them stated at full length in the Second Report of the Children's

mercy and righteousness, the guilt of their rejection rests upon the country, and the duty of us in

Employment Commission. Consider it, Sir, under its physical aspect. Will the House turn a deaf ear to the complaints of suffering that resound from all quarters? Will it be indifferent to the physical consequences on the rising generation? You have the authority of the Government Commissioner, Dr. Hawkins, a gentleman well skilled in medical statistics—‘I have never been,’ he tells you, ‘in any town in Great Britain or in Europe, in which degeneracy of form and colour from the national standard has been so obvious’ as in Manchester. I have, moreover, the authority of one of my most ardent antagonists, himself a mighty mill-owner, that, if the present system of labour be persevered in, the ‘county of Lancaster will become a province of pigmies.’ The toil of the females has hitherto been considered the characteristic of savage life; but we, in the height of our refinement, impose on the wives and daughters of England a burden from which, at least during pregnancy, they would be exempted even in slave-holding states, and among the Indians of America. But every consideration sinks to nothing compared with that which springs from the contemplation of the moral mischiefs this system engenders and sustains. You are poisoning the very sources of order and happiness and virtue; you are tearing up, root and branch, all the relations of families to each other; you are annulling, as it were, the institution of domestic life, decreed by Providence himself, the wisest and kindest of earthly ordinances, the mainstay of social peace and virtue, and therein of national security. There is a time to be born, and a time to die—this we readily concede; but is there not also a time to live, to live to every conjugal and parental duty? This we seem as stiffly to deny; and yet in the same breath we talk of the value of education, and the necessity of moral and reli-

the ministry is to speak openly and boldly concerning them.

The situation of the poorer classes is one of deep national importance, and specially requiring the aid of wise, righteous, and merciful laws. It is not to be denied that from a variety of causes, from their own corruption, from religious and moral neglect on the part of others, from low wages, utterly inadequate in numberless cases to

religious training. Sir, it is all in vain; there is no national, no private system that can supersede the influence of the parental precept and parental example—they are ordained to exercise an unlimited power over the years of childhood; and, amidst all their imperfections, are accompanied with a blessing. Whose experience is so confined that it does not extend to a knowledge and an appreciation of the maternal influence over every grade and department of society? It matters not whether it be prince or peasant, all that is best, all that is lasting in the character of a man, he has learned at his mother's knees. Search the records, examine the opening years of those who have been distinguished for ability and virtue, and you will ascribe, with few exceptions, the early culture of their minds, and, above all, the first discipline of the heart, to the intelligence and affection of the mother, or at least of some pious woman who, with the self-denial and tenderness of her sex, has entered as a substitute, on the duties of the sacred office. No, Sir, these sources of mischief must be dried up; every public consideration demands such an issue; the health of the females; the care of their families; their conjugal and parental duties; the comfort of their homes; the decency of their lives; the rights of their husbands; the peace of society; and the laws of God."

meet their actual necessities, from want of employment even at those low wages, and from miserable accommodation in their dwellings, large masses of the poor are becoming more and more degraded and immoral, and the higher and lower classes are more and more separated from each other. Such a state of things is full of national dangers as well as contrary to the Word of God. The difficulty of legislation for the poor is acknowledged and felt by all; and a remedy for present evils is a subject worthy of the deepest wisdom and highest intellect of our country. The recent efforts that have been made have had but partial success; the loss of local knowledge, ministerial superintendence, and personal interest and sympathy in the parish system, has not been fully compensated by the benefits of union and centralization. Very much must depend on the administration in each case, but it is to be feared that the sufferings of the poor and the consequent bitterness of their spirits against their superiors are not diminishing, but increasing.

Oh! that the same powers of intellect which have been so largely directed to improving our machinery and our facilities of intercourse, to advancing our commerce, to enable us to compete with others in trade, and in every way to increase wealth, had also been directed to the best methods

of shewing mercy to the poor, and improving their religious and moral character, to shewing real sympathy with their wants, discouraging indolence, improvidence, and vice, opening channels for willing industry, fostering plans and habits of economy, forethought, and providence, and advancing their spiritual and eternal, as well as their temporal welfare! Had this been done, the British Islands would have been yet a large blessing to mankind, and infinitely fuller of home happiness. Nothing but the principles of the Bible, carried out in the spirit of our Divine Redeemer, in all our dealings with the poor, can meet their necessities or ensure our own safety. God's Providence ever corresponds with his Word, and all legislation not founded on that Word, will fail of attaining that success at which it aims.

#### THE ABUSES OF WEALTH AND POWER.

The very characters of the age are the growth of luxury and covetousness. We witness a constant accumulating of property notwithstanding the miseries abounding all around us. *Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.* It is our bounden duty in the ministry to lift up our voices against these sins. It is God's own command to us, *Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy*



*voice like a trumpet, show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.* (Isa. lviii. 1.) With many delightful and blessed exceptions, of which the recently formed District Visiting Society, under the patronage of the Bishop of London, has furnished gratifying proofs, large masses of the rich and the great, the noble and the mighty, are so widely separated from the poor as to have no communion with their distresses, and no fellowship with their necessities. While we admit that those in exalted situations require large establishments according to the wealth with which God has intrusted them, yet there is great danger that the circumstances of their condition should harden their hearts to the distresses of the poor. This, we fear, must be the case where the mind is filled with thought and care for splendid equipages, magnificent houses, rich furniture, adapted to meet the most luxurious ease, costly pictures, the most dainty diet, and the most beautiful ornaments; while many a poor and afflicted man at the very gates is lying full of sores, naked and in misery, no man caring for his soul. Oh, it is most fearful to think that there are instances in which the luxuries are actually gained by stinting the wages of the poor, and by driving hard bargains with eager or needy tradesmen, or by some skilful advantage over the ignorance or the necessities of

those with whom they have had dealings. God give us all a spirit of watchfulness against these temptations, and of real consideration for the ease and necessities of those under us.

#### BLIND FLATTERY INSTEAD OF RIGHTEOUS LOVE.

This in times of confusion, like the present, is another characteristic of the same national sin. Those who are successful and acquire wealth are fawned upon and flattered, instead of being faithfully and affectionately dealt with, and warned of their peculiar temptations and dangers.

*We call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up.* We find in the 12th Psalm, that at the very time when God says, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord;* he describes their oppressors, saying, *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour, with flattering lips, and with a double heart do they speak.*

We have indeed, my brethren, to bless God for many manifestations of Divine grace, in the noble liberality of devoted and faithful servants of Christ. Let this be acknowledged with joy and thankfulness. But perhaps in few countries have the eager pursuit of wealth, the ardent spirit of competition for it, and the reckless inconsideration of those injured by it, produced more oppression of the poor, and greater degradation and misery. Truly

wealth wrought out of the sinews of the poor, with careless indifference at what cost it may be to their bodily wants, and to the total neglect of their immortal souls, wealth so acquired is nothing but a curse. And the most aggravated guilt of all, is when this is joined with a religious profession.

*Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers ; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

Let us for a moment turn from all these iniquities to that perfect contrast, the meek, the compassionate, the holy, the pure, the loving Saviour, and refresh ourselves with his grace and goodness. *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.* He is Lord of all, and yet he became servant of all. Heaven and earth were at his command ; Divine perfections and glory were his ; yet he emptied himself and *became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, that we might be delivered from all woe, and raised to partake of his bliss and his glory : we who were enemies ; vile, ungrateful, sinful rebels. He showed us the way of dealing with such ; that way of overcoming evil with good

which is truly Divine and heavenly. And so he conquered my heart. And so, Christians, he has conquered yours, and we will by truth and overflowing love seek to overcome others on this Gospel plan. Thus shall innumerable souls be saved and accepted, and we ourselves welcomed in the day of his appearing.

### III. THE MOTIVE TO THESE DUTIES IN THE PROSPECT OF THE LORD'S COMING.

I need not now dwell on the certainty and the nearness of the Lord's coming. I trust that your hearts are established in it. That it is not a mere careless repetition of words when you say, *We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge*; and when you say in the creed, *He sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead*. We doubt not of the fact at all. We are expecting it, we are waiting for it; we are earnestly desiring to be ready and prepared for it. *Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief*. Oh, may we live more and more in the light of this coming judgment, and accustom ourselves to view everything with constant reference to it. The bringing near of the final judgment, and the realizing of the wrath then to descend on the wicked, and the promised

glory then to be bestowed on the righteous, are full of weighty influence on all our duties. The solemnities and infinite magnitude of the judgment, its irreversible issue, and its eternal decision of our future state, as inhabitants of hell or of heaven, and the assurance that *the Judge* now *standeth at the door*, cannot fail to quicken every one who receives God's testimony in simple faith.

The speedy coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ speak powerfully in various ways.

#### 1. FRESH LIGHT IS AFFORDED TO THE CONSCIENCE.

Let us but set the light of that day before us, and how many delusions it will banish. How vain the pleas for national Atheism when the King of nations returns to judgment! How wicked will national indifference to the word of God be seen to be, when he who in tender mercy gave us as a nation that light from heaven, gathers us among all nations to give account, according to that word, of all our privileges and advantages, of the way we received them, and of the use which we made of them. How dreadfully infatuated will be found to be the neglect of the poor, when the Judge before whom all stand shall account it as neglect of himself according to his own forewarning; and *the rich and the poor meet together* before the judgment-seat, and the Lord the Maker

of them all, gives sentence upon both without respect of persons. Place all things in the presence of the judgment to come. Thus a new light will be thrown on our duties, as we think of rulers and subjects, lawgivers and judges, princes and people, all standing together before the one great Judge and rendering account to him of all they have done. All policy short of a reference to this is the policy of short-sightedness and folly. This alone will lead to what is truly disinterested, noble, generous, upright, wise, and enduring. God give us as individuals, and as a nation, this character and this glory.

A POWERFUL APPEAL IS THUS MADE TO OUR FEAR. The descriptions in God's Word as to the judgments that shall then descend on the wicked are some of the most awful and awakening parts of Scripture. Terrible is the doom pronounced on rebellious and ungodly nations. A large part of Scripture records it. I will quote a passage from the Old, and another from the New Testament. God thus speaks by Isaiah xxxiv. 1, *Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein: the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.*



*Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. God also thus speaks by the Apostle John, in the New Testament: I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. We have, then, an account of the fearful supper of the great God for all the fowls of heaven. God has revealed in his word these tremendous scenes of judgment on the wicked at the return of our Lord from heaven. The wicked, by a hard and impenitent heart, treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Oh, that this*

revelation of coming wrath may fill our hearts with godly fear ; may lead us all to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance* by pursuing the conduct which Daniel has here pointed out.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME becomes manifest as we realize the coming and the kingdom of Christ. As it was in the case of Nineveh, when Jonah preached, *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed* ; so it is now ; there is but a very short season of grace left. There is a pressing need to urge upon our country the duty of national repentance, that if possible God's judgments may be averted from our country. There is urgent need that all should be exhorted to press into the kingdom of heaven, lest they finally be found among those who seek to enter in and shall not be able. The time is at hand. Prophetical dates, given us in the Word of God for our instruction, are closing. We dare not, indeed, fix precise times. I would caution you against any positive statements fixing the period of our Lord's return ; but a waiting, watching spirit is ever to be cultivated. The gathering clouds in increasing blackness are suspended over us. Oh, my brethren, let us at last turn to the Lord our God, *for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. Who knoweth if he will return and*

*leave a blessing behind him?* Oh, how precious is the present time! What would those who neglect this season give for the present hours hereafter! And if it be impossible to save our country from Divine judgments, yet, by protesting against evil and promoting the truth with all our power, we shall unquestionably help to save many, as well as to deliver our own souls.

THE BLESSED PROSPECT OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST may well finally animate us to these duties. We have riches, honour, and life before us, infinitely surpassing all that this world can boast of. We have a lively hope of *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven* for us. Hope is the quickener of zeal. Whatever may be the result of our efforts, whatever our success, or want of it, in seeking the best welfare of our own land, however we may weep over it, if our efforts for its good meet with nothing but disappointment and reproach and injury, to the true servant of Christ final success is sure. We have *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We seek and desire a better country, that is an heavenly. Our King shall reign in righteousness, and his princes shall rule in judgment.* The people of God shall more than realize their best wishes. They shall

witness the nations of the saved, walking in holy worship and mutual love. Nay, they themselves shall be *kings and priests unto God, and shall reign over the earth.* They themselves shall inherit the nations, and *delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Oh! may our God shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom.

I would now close my important subject with two practical directions. 1. WATCH AGAINST AND TESTIFY AGAINST THE PECULIAR EVILS OF THESE DAYS. Those evils are indeed multiplying and opposite; there is Infidelity and there is Popery; there are corrupt authorities and there is democratic lawlessness; there is Tractarianism and there is Voluntaryism; but in more immediate connexion with my subject, I would bring before you that overvaluing of wealth, and making haste to be rich, which is the source of such a multitude of evils. *He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.* (Prov. xxviii. 20.) *They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.* (1 Tim. vi. 9—11.) Let none of us seek great things for

ourselves here below. Oh! what are all those earthly distinctions which men so overvalue? They are so afraid of sinking into a lower caste in society, and of losing their particular station, that they lose sight of infinitely higher distinctions and privileges than any which this world can give, and which are open to us all in the favour and love of God. Hence they become exposed to temptations on every side, and are in danger of making light of mercy and truth and righteousness in their dealings with others. Let no temptations, for instance, of cheapness in purchase ever tempt you knowingly to frequent those places where cheapness is attained by systems of fraud or injustice. Be especially on your watch against anything that bears hard on the weak and the needy. *Mind not high things. Condescend to men of low estate.* One great rule regarding all earthly objects is peculiarly seasonable now. *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.* Commit everything to him. And as it regards others, let us be full of compassion and love; saving men with fear, *pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh.* Let us distinctly discern that open evils, unrepressed and not testified against, are the chief sources of national danger to our country; and let true patriotism, as well as true Christianity, lead

us all distinctly to confess the truth, and bear witness against that which is evil. Let us testify against it wherever it exhibits itself, and more especially in our own Church and our own immediate circle; but all in the spirit of contrition and sympathy, as ourselves also full of sin; all in the spirit of tender, holy, and faithful love. *If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.* The blessings of this course will be unspeakable. Possibly it may not save our country. Josiah's piety did not save Israel from the captivity; the piety of the primitive Church did not deliver the Jewish nation from the Romans. But, even in this respect, *who knoweth?* The result is with God. Your personal salvation, the increase of the saved, their preparation for tribulation and the coming glory, and a testimony left which may hereafter be a blessing to a world that now rejects it; these blessed effects furnish the rich recompence of real faithfulness to Christ.

MAINTAIN A WAITING SPIRIT FOR THE COMING AND KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR.

This is the crowning grace of a Christian, *Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This duty is constantly insisted upon in the New Testament in passages innumerable, that are, I trust, now familiar to your minds. But still *search the Scriptures*; keep before



you thus in lively recollection their invariable testimony to the nearness, the suddenness, the magnitude, and the eternal issues of his return. In the last book of Scripture, the last of the Apostles, the divine John, claims this as the common token of brotherhood among Christians. *I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.* It is this patient waiting for the kingdom, which is the present feature and character of our great Head and Lord in the highest heavens, and will be so till the countless prayers of the myriads of his people, *Thy kingdom come*, offered in every age, are all answered, and the last trumpet sounds, and *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.* The same patient waiting must mark and distinguish us his followers. This will support us amidst multiplied conflicts, and troubles on every side. This will quicken and strengthen us to all self-denying labours of love. This will assist us to maintain meekness and patience under every wrong. *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Murmur not one against another, lest ye be condemned. Behold the Judge standeth before the door.* I desire to preach, I desire to live, in the realizing conviction of the truth and magnitude of these blessed truths.

God help us all to believe them, to confess them, and act upon them.

I bless God that I have lived to see so many of my beloved brethren in our Church confess these truths with such simplicity and faithfulness. The Lord grant a full blessing to our testimony in this metropolis of the whole earth. And the Lord grant that our dear brother who has opened his church to us, and invited us here to give this testimony, may find a large and gracious revival of true religion in his own flock and his own parish through these Lectures. God, our Saviour, grant that we may all in the day of his appearing, have to thank for ever, Him from whom alone all good things come, for these united labours of love, and these opportunities of testifying and of hearing his truth.

## LECTURE XI.

THE LONG EXPECTATION OF THE COMING OF  
THE LORD, A PLEDGE OF ITS SURPASSING  
GLORY.

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BY THE REV. B. PHILPOT, A.M.,

RECTOR OF GREAT CRESSINGHAM, FORMERLY ARCHDEACON OF THE ISLE OF MAN.

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ROMANS VIII. 18—23.

*“ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits*

*of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."*

THOUSANDS of way-worn pilgrims have got refreshment at this fountain. Coming, as I do, from a scene of long-endured affliction, I seem to be charged with the testimony of a Christian sufferer, that, in the fiercest onset of disease, faith in the precious promise of *the glory which shall be revealed* at the coming of the Lord, is equal to the exigency. Happily for the believer *this present evil world* is the land of the dying. The rebel was expelled from Eden ere he could take of the *tree of life*, and fix the whole family of man in the bondage of perpetual corruption. This vile *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*. But if we be Christ's we shall be *clothed upon with our house which is from heaven*, a sinless and incorruptible body. *Verily*, said one, whose standing was on the Rock of Ages, *verily I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*. The eye of faith beheld a land wrenched from the grasp of death, and *given to the people of the saints of the Most High for an everlasting kingdom*.

It is in reference to this glory that the elect children are called *heirs of God*, for *God manifest*

*in the flesh* is their portion. They enjoy the inheritance because they are Christ's, and Christ is one with the Father. So that the Father and the Son and the saints, shall all *be glorified together*. Whatever glory the Son has obtained, the saints shall share it with him at the first resurrection, for they shall then *sit with him on his own throne*. That throne is said (Isa. ix. 7) to be *an everlasting throne, the throne of David*; a description applied to the holy seed by the angel at the annunciation, and cited by St. Peter (Acts ii. 30) as a proof that Christ's humanity *saw no corruption*, but is preserved for universal dominion, when the *kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord*; even those *new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*. And thus, seated by the Conqueror's side, the saints shall be *joint heirs with Christ*.

On this ground the apostle proceeds to instruct and comfort the Church upon the glorious issues of the present dispensation. As a calculator of no ordinary experience, he pronounces the prospect to be full of sustaining joy to the believer. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*. Dear brethren, have you mastered this difficult arithmetic? Having added up your losses for Christ in one column, and your gains by him in another, have

you been enabled to discover such an enormous balance in favour of the Christian life that you can set your seal to the same truth, experimentally satisfied that the heaviest trials of time are but as the dust of the balance compared with *the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which shall be revealed in you ?*

We are next instructed that this glory consists first, in the *manifestation of the sons of God*, or the showing forth of the full sonship and adoption of the elect ; which is declared (1 John iii. 2) to mean a perfected likeness to Christ in the glorified body at his appearing ; and secondly, in the *restitution of all things*.

For this glorious *manifestation and kingdom to come* the creature is said to be waiting with *hope and earnest expectation*.

Let us first, closely examine the text and the context, in reference to the subject proposed—"The pledge herein afforded of surpassing glory at the coming of the Lord;" and, secondly, draw from it some practical improvement.

In saying that the long expectation of the Second Advent is a pledge that its fulfilment will be accompanied by circumstances of unprecedented grandeur ;—that there will then be exhibited such a discomfiture of the powers of darkness, and such a display of the heavenly glory as the eye of



man hath never yet seen, nor his ear heard, nor his heart conceived;—we refer to that sustaining anticipation of the return of the Son of man, which has, in every age, with more or less clearness, cheered the hearts of some Christian believers, who looked for light only to the Searcher and Revealer of the deep things of God, and prayerfully *compared spiritual things with spiritual*. Expectations there have been on this subject, dear to the heart, and yet ruinous to the soul; as having no warrant in the Scriptures of truth. Such are the delusions of the Mahometan paradise. And there have been expectations, less at variance with truth, deeply cherished, and yet vain. Such were the anticipations of the Jews respecting the *nature* of the First Advent; such, at a later period, the conclusions of the fifth monarchy men respecting its *period*. The question is, What says the Scripture? Does it there appear that the *earnest expectation of the creature*, under the gradually increasing light of each successive dispensation for near 6000 years, is a Divine assurance, that, *when the desire cometh, it will be a Tree of life* loaded with all manner of marvellous and glorious fruits. May the Holy Spirit keep us from all error in the inquiry, and guide us into all truth!

We inquire not into the crigin of sin, either in heaven or earth: it would *be aiming to be wise*

*above what is written.* We can only thus far see, that the happiness of a finite being, in communion with an infinite, is as much dependent on the willing submission of the one, as on the perfect goodness, wisdom, and power of the other. Obedience, to be acceptable, must spring from the will, constrained by the affections. A compulsory obedience would be fatal to the perfection of the happiness which God designed. So that, when the will of man became diverse to the will of God, (and as a creature man was necessarily liable to this change,) that act of disobedience was the death of the soul's enjoyment in fellowship with the Creator, as certainly as a sword passing through the heart would be the annihilation of the body's life. This having happened, the Divine likeness was effaced, the Divine law dishonoured, and the creature was robbed of his joy; a blighting curse fell on all creation, and the adversary erected his throne amid the ruins of a fallen world. The great problem now solving before the universe is the extraction from this apparent evil of *yet more abundant* good. Through a live-long night of darkness and disorder, the bereaved family of man has now been waiting for the return of its promised Deliverer; and, in the *fulness of time*, when the Divine purpose in this dispensation shall have ripened, and the malignity of sin and the glory

of God's perfection as far as possible exhibited to the Church, then the sign of the Son of man shall be seen, and the promise (Acts i. 11) be fulfilled. *This same Jesus which is taken up from you, &c.*

Meanwhile, the *earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*. The reference to the *whole creation* is here so manifest from the original, that the notion respecting the Gentiles being meant by *the creature*, only serves to show the lengths to which theologians of the last century were prepared to go rather than admit the truth of Millennarian views of Scripture. However, by one eminent commentator of that period,\* the word is defined to be "the whole frame of nature;" that is, every individual thing of this planet, which, having been created straight and orderly, was brought into the bondage of corruption and the misery of disorder by the disobedience and fall of man. This is the meaning of the word in other sacred Scriptures, and in the best Greek authors. The most learned of the Fathers also explain it as including "the brute beasts and creatures insensate," as well as man. It is, in fact, so translated in verse 22. The singular number is used as the most comprehensive and expressive form in which all things composing the world could be described, mutually depending, as they do, on each other.

\* Rev. Matthew Henry.

All were made perfectly *good* by the Son of God ; all shared the blighting effects of transgression. By him all things shall be restored and *made new*. (Rev. xxi. 5.) It is said to be for these glorious *times of the restitution of all things* that, even in their *groaning* condition, they are kept from falling to pieces by the sustaining power of the Son of man ; *by Him all things consist* or stand together. And when that august day arrive that He shall *be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, a tremendous convulsion will sift the whole frame of nature : all the effects of the curse shall be removed : there shall be a purifying baptism of fire, as once there was of water : the dross of corruption shall be consumed *by the brightness of his coming*. *Instead of the thorn* (the especial mark of the curse) *shall come up the fir-tree ; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree*. (Is. lv. 13.) *The wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox*. (Is. lxv. 25.) *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*. (Is. xi. 9.)

At present, *the creature* retains all the marks of having become *subject to vanity*,—fruitless and un-

profitable to God.—“Disaster,” is written on the forefront of the whole creation. Man, though *the highest part of the dust of the earth* (Prov. viii. 26), is a poor vile creature, *crushed before the moth*. *Verily, every man living* (in regard to his mortal condition), *at his best state, is altogether vanity*. All are *captivated by the law of sin*. The universal history of the world, with its whole animate and inanimate family, in reference to its original design, is “one great impertinence.”

The whole guilt of this moral insolvency of the creation, lays at the door of man:—other creatures fell, *not willingly, but by reason of Adam’s sin*. It was an inseparable judicial result of the sovereign creatures’s alienation from God, and consequent loss of purity and power. Possibly the sustenance of the immortal man would have been perilous to the organs of the corrupt man. Be that as it may, the fact is too palpable that the *whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*. Their *speech, indeed, uttereth praise to God*, but they resound only with reproach on the apostate who severed them from liberty and peace.

But our text goes on to say, that all this *vanity* shall cease whenever the curse shall be removed from the *body* of man. “As the creation was made corruptible by us, so shall it be made incor-

ruptible with us.”\* The creature is *subjected in hope*. By a striking prosopopœia, all nature is here represented as waiting in a posture of intense desire; *groaning*, as in labour; and crying out in pain, to be delivered of its defilement and bondage and dishonour: longing to share with man his restored union with God, and again minister to man’s comfort and the Creator’s glory.

The other expressions all refer to the objects of hope and desire left to the fallen creature. *It waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*. Believers are in this world God’s *hidden ones*.† *It does not yet appear what they shall be*. They only know that *when Jesus comes they shall be like him*: having suffered *with him and for him* on earth,—on earth they shall *reign with him*. The *vile body* of sin and death, being *changed*, that it may be *fashioned like unto his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to *subdue all things unto himself*; they shall be set at *liberty* to see and love and praise their heavenly Father, without mixture of infirmity. *In this tabernacle we groan, being burthened, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven*. (2 Cor. v. 2.) The assumption of the glorified body will complete the

\* Theodoret and others of the Fathers.

† Ps. lxxxiii. 3.



*adoption.* It is *at the resurrection of the just* that the believer is admitted to his *joint heirship* with the Son of David, and *openly declared to be a son of God with power.* As yet the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty have received only the *Holy Spirit of promise as an earnest of the inheritance*, something graciously paid in part, as a security for the payment of the whole, a pledge of the glory to be revealed in them when the fitting time shall come for the *purchased possession* to be fully redeemed. Rightfully our whole souls, and bodies, and spirits, are the purchased property of the kinsman Redeemer; but as yet the spirit only is renewed: *we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* That no less than the soul must be purged from all defilement, for *nothing that defileth shall enter into the New Jerusalem.*

From this fact the apostle draws a practical admonition to the Church. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption:* (Eph. iv. 30). And whenever this set time draw near, we are told that certain predicted signs shall instruct the wise and watching servants, that their Master is at hand, and that they may begin to *look up, and lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh:* (Luke xxi. 28).

With this understanding of the text, let us

now turn to the context, and notice how important it is, in reading the Scriptures, to bear these elevating truths in mind. All Scripture *testifies of Jesus*, and when he himself opened the Old Testament to his disciples, *he began at Moses, and in the Prophets and Psalms, and all the Scriptures, he expounded unto them the things concerning himself.* (Luke xxiv. 27, 44.)

There are, indeed, few prophecies which have not some reference to the second coming of Christ. Often the Holy Spirit, in one verse, passing rapidly over thousands of years, with a sublime comprehensiveness peculiar to the omniscient mind of God, includes all the mysteries of grace manifested in the holy *child born*, and all the majesty of universal and everlasting dominion exhibited in the *Prince of peace* and King of kings. Most of the Psalms are Divine meditations, and songs of praise on the person and triumphs of the Redeemer, in the latter-day glory of his Church. The Holy Spirit has been pleased to give his own commentary, in the New Testament, on many of his revelations in the Old. To take one example of this;—we are told, in the second chapter of Hebrews, that the eighth Psalm is a triumphant celebration of the Messiah's reign over the rescued and restored creation. He is represented as *crowned with honour and glory*;—having dominion

over all the earth, including *the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air*:—all things are to be put under his feet, *whether they be things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth, angels, men, and devils*, with all the inferior creation, are to own his sovereign sway: and the highest angelic beings will count it their happiness to worship him. Some of these psalms would seem to be expressly provided for the Church to be singing while the Lord is *descending* from above.

Take this as an illustration of our text: and if, with such views of the coming reign of Christ, we search the Scriptures, much obscurity will be removed, and great light and clearness on many prophetic passages imparted.

The only portion which I shall bring before you from the New Testament is Rev. v. 1—10. It shows us in what light the *redemption* spoken of in the text is regarded by the saints who are already with Jesus.

The scenes of the vision here displayed to the apostle were admirably adapted to the comprehension of one versed in the Jewish law. It appears from Leviticus xxv. 23—28, and Deut. xxv. 5—10, that the children of Israel held their possessions in the Holy Land as a grant in perpetuity from the Lord. If distress compelled any of them to raise money upon his inheritance, or to sell it, a clause

was inserted in the conveyance or mortgage-deed, by which he, or a certain near kinsman, reserved the right of redeeming and re-entering upon it, under stated conditions. The conditions were two-fold. First, the principal and interest of the debt, calculated to the next jubilee (at which all lands reverted to the original possessor), were to be paid up. And, secondly, the *kinsman redeemer*, was required to marry the widow, if the proprietor had died. Should he refuse thus to complete the redemption, the *shoe was loosed from off his foot*; which explains the Baptist's expression (John i. 27). When the Levites asked him if he were *the Redeemer*, he denied it, and pointed to Christ as the kinsman who was come to perform the conditions; so that no man was *worthy* to take off his shoe, or even to *unloose the latchet of it*. You will find this strikingly illustrated in the case of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth iii. 9, 12, and iv. 3—7). One other interesting fact is mentioned in Jeremiah xxxii. 6—15. There was a book called *the book of the purchase*, in which, at the time of mortgaging or alienating the property from the family, the contracting parties and the kinsman who claimed the heirship, with certain witnesses, subscribed their names. This book, partly sealed and partly open, was delivered to the priest, and not to be given up till the kinsman redeemer could substan-

tiate his claims by fulfilling the two conditions, viz., paying the price and marrying the widow. On doing this, the book was delivered to him as the rightful heir, and he broke the seals.

Now let us turn to Rev. v. Was not this *the book seen in the right hand of him that sat on the throne?* Adam had been put into full possession of all the earth (Gen. i. 28). He sold his inheritance into the hand of a stranger to his family. Satan entered on the dominion of this world; and all the posterity and dependents of Adam were left as a disconsolate widow to *groan* in desolation and captivity, *being burthened* with the curse of sin. The great question before the universe was:—Who can redeem *the creature* from the stranger's power? Who can pay the price of its release, and restore the widow to the honours of the married wife; and thus be able to demand the deed of evidence, and to *loose the seals thereof?* This appears to be the question of the second verse. *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* And there was silence in heaven for awhile. *And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.* What! shall the

purpose of God be thwarted? Shall the universe incur the dire misfortune of seeing any of Jehovah's attributes short of perfection?

While the harps of heaven thus paused in their melody, *one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* Jesus Christ, our kinsman Redeemer, the *root and offspring of David*, David's son in the flesh, David's Lord in the Deity, hath paid down the costly price of redemption. Owing nothing on his own account, he, for our sakes, hath performed a spotless *obedience even unto the death* of a malefactor on the cross. Then John looked and behold it was the *Lamb slain*, and not the *Lion* in his strength, that he saw; for he looked with the eye of faith. He saw the Redeemer *come and take the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.* And the melody of the celestial choir is heard again, and they have tuned their harps to a *new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.* (Rev. v. 5, 10.)



Thus are *the spirits of the just* worshipping and adoring the Lamb, by whose blood they are redeemed, and joyfully anticipating the glorious consummation of all their hopes ; when, reunited with their risen and glorified bodies, they shall sit on Jesus's throne, and *reign with him on the earth.*

Here, then, is a pledge that, at that great jubilee of the universe, *the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body*, so long waited for, so anxiously expected, shall be complete, and all things restored ; and that Satan, who is already turned out of possession of every renewed heart (as an *earnest of redemption*), shall be *bruised under the saints' feet*. The Captain of our salvation has *girded his sword upon his thigh*, and fought for his bride ; and he is now *arraying her in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints*. His parting word was, *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice*. The mourning widow shall then become the *Lamb's wife*. *The King greatly desires her beauty* ; and he would have her *all glorious within*. Limb by limb he is adorning his betrothed for the wedding. Every soul *delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son*, is a new member of the bride. The Gospel trumpet is now sounding in every tongue and through every land to call in his redeemed. While one of God's chosen remains

to be regenerated *and born again of the Spirit*, the bridegroom tarries. He must be *glorified in all his saints*; and his long-suffering patience is now exercised, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. But he longs to *see of the travail of his soul*, and to take home his beloved to his palace: (Ps. xlv. 15). Every hour is adding to that *great multitude which no man can number*, which shall be gathered out of the world, and stand before the throne clad in the garments of salvation. When the number of the elect shall be accomplished, the kingdom of God shall come; and the righteous living, “with all who have departed in the true faith, shall have their perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in God’s eternal and everlasting glory.”\* Then shall be heard *the voice as of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* (Rev. xix. 6, 7.)

Here, then, we have an illustration of that redemption for which “*the creature*” is anxiously waiting; and here we see, in the Lord’s tarrying, a pledge that his victory shall be complete; that *the enemy and the avenger shall be stilled* for ever;

\* Church Burial Service.

the largest possible amount of good issue from this apparent evil; the *light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ* as fully displayed to the understanding and admiration of the saints as they have capacity or meekness to receive, and the whole redeemed man, *beautified with Christ's salvation*, shall be blessed with the full fruition of God himself, as his glorious and everlasting portion. Dear brethren, when our hearts are troubled, and we would have the Lord make haste to come, let this consideration check our impatience: that there yet may be many a prodigal son *wasting his substance in a far country*, and that God is graciously waiting till the *dead shall be alive, and the lost be found*.

Such is the Scripture doctrine of *redemption*, or the perfect deliverance and regeneration of the *whole creation*, to which *the creature* looks forward with *earnest expectation*. Traces of it are found in the earliest ages of the world, as the source of comfort to the believer, and of warning to the ungodly. Job, in the midst of his deep sorrow, lifted up his heart, and said, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another*. Enoch aroused the careless of his generation, by preaching to them

the second coming of Christ: (Jude 14). The promise of this glorious reign on earth would seem, indeed, to be the silver chord that runs through every past dispensation, giving life and animation to the Church. Each had its share in the advancement of this mighty purpose, and when that was fulfilled, it gave way to clearer light and other manifestations of the Divine plan. Four thousand years was the world training for the first advent; and now, in these last days, the eye of faith sees every thing around bending to the *dispensation of the fulness of times* when God *will gather together in one all things in Christ*, when he shall *return in the glory of the Father, and in his own glory, and of the holy angels*. Personally he is known to this world only in the deep humiliation of the *suffering manhood*; *wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities*. But he *suffered these things* that he might *enter into his glory*: and distinctly do the Scriptures set forth as a part of that glory the *many crowns* of earthly dominion, the government of a renovated earth. (Is. ix. 7; Rev. xix. 12; xii. 6, &c.)

Jehovah has once appeared in the posture of entreaty, beseeching men to be reconciled to him. He will next appear as a *warrior, with his garments rolled in the blood* of his despisers. *Until now*, groaning and conflict, oppression and bondage, is the condition of this sin-darkened world.

Even the sanctuary of the believer's breast is often overcast by the shadow of that cloud. But the pangs of *the creature* are those of *travail* and not of *death*. *A new earth and new heavens* are coming to the birth, and the days will not be accomplished for the delivery till God sees that all his projects of glory are matured. Prepare, brethren, for a fiercer struggle ere the Deliverer come. The heaviest throes of the labour are those which precede the birth. *That day shall not come except there come a falling away first*; and the lawless one be revealed, and the *nations be sifted with the sieve of vanity*, and a distincter separation made between the Church and the world, so as to exhibit more clearly the *enmity* which God hath put between them.

Dear brethren, while the bridegroom tarries, see that ye have *oil in your vessels*. Settle the question of your soul's hopes, and seek to be deeply *rooted and grounded in the faith*; for amid the coming *distress of nations with perplexity, and hearts failing for fear*, they only who are on the Lord's side shall be gathered into the ark of safety. While every mere outer-court worshipper shall *be trodden down of the Gentiles*, his own elect shall God *hide beneath the shadow of his wings*, until *the indignation be overpast*. (Ps. lvii. 1; Is. xxvi. 20.) The *first watch* of this weary night saw the

deluge of waters descend in wrath on a sinful generation, but there was an ark prepared for the faithful few. The *second watch* brought the storm of fire on the ungodly cities, but ere it fell the righteous family were conducted to a city of refuge. At the *third watch* the Roman eagles gathered to the prey, and Jerusalem became an heap of stones ; but God restrained the armies of the alien till all his own people were safe in the mountain. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed* : (Luke xvii. 30). At that *fourth watch* of the night his tempest-tossed disciples shall hear, above the strife of the billows, the sweet voice of their returning Lord, saying, *Be ye of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*. While the great mass of mankind, as in the days of Noah and Lot, shall be *minding earthly things* (Luke xvii. 27, 28 ; Phil. iii. 19) ; settling down on a false security (1 Thess. v. 3) ; *having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* (2 Tim. iii. 5) ; and impatient at the preaching of Christ's glorious reign on earth (2 Pet. iii. 4, &c.) ; the watching servant of God shall *not be in darkness* : he shall be instructed by the signs of the times to trim his lamp and *hasten unto the appearing of his Lord*. An *evening tide light* shall be shed for him on coming events, and to him *knowledge shall be increased*. He shall stand ready to be received up to that glory cloud



on which Jesus shall descend, ere the brightness of his presence go forth to purge the earth. *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* The *candle of the Lord* in every believer's soul, divested of its encasement of clay, and *clothed upon with its house from heaven*, shall enjoy the full commingling of its rays with *the light of the Lamb*. Then shall all *the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* The prince of this world shall be righteously expelled from his usurped dominion, and *there shall be nothing to hurt nor destroy in all this holy mountain of the Lord.* Love shall bear sovereign sway over every heart, and shed its heavenly sweetness over every thought, and word, and action. One note of praise shall descend from heaven to earth, and ascend from earth to heaven again, saying, *Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

In conclusion, I would briefly remind you of the practical importance of this doctrine, and the frequent use made of it in the New Testament, as a motive for watchfulness, and a source of consolation to the Church.\*

The time seems long, as we reckon time, *but the*

\* See Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 42—51; xxv. 6—13; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; Phil. iv. 5; 1 Peter i. 13; 1 John ii. 28; 1 Thess. v. 2, 4, 6; Heb. x. 24; James v. 7, 8; &c, &c.

*Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.* Though for 6,000 years the storms of sin have beaten on our planet, and changed it to a *waste howling wilderness*, it will seem but a little day to look back upon from the eternal mansions of the blessed. Millions of ages will roll on, and millions more succeed them ; and still the saints of the Most High will be speaking one to another of the cloud which enveloped in darkness this once fair garden of the Lord, in the infancy of its existence. Then shall *Wisdom be justified of her children* ; and the adversary, who seemed for a moment to thwart the benevolence of the Infinite and Eternal shall be seen to have ministered to his glory. The sorrow permitted to endure for the night will only enhance the joy which cometh in the morning. *Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ?*

How are your minds affected *doctrinally* and *practically* on the subject of Christ's personally appearing in his kingdom.

*Doctrinally.* Have you prayerfully searched the Scriptures whether these things be so ? If the spirits of the just made perfect are expecting, with intense desire, the time when they shall put on their resurrection bodies, and *\*reign with Christ on*

\* Zech. xiv. 5 ; Rev. xx. 6 ; Rev. v. 10.

*the earth*, how strange must it appear to them that this crowning act of the Redeemer's glory—the theme of their unceasing song, should be so little regarded, as the animating object of hope, and the solemn ground of admonition to living man. In the first ages of Christianity the doctrine, as far as we can learn, universally prevailed in the Church. Some of the fathers added, indeed, many traditionary details respecting the restored earth; but they all substantially taught the pre-millennial advent and reign of Christ as we have endeavoured to put it before you. It was during the spiritual bondage of the middle ages that the doctrine was most violently opposed. The features of the mystic *Babylon* were too plainly portrayed in the dominant Church to expect from her aught but the most vindictive persecution of those who dared thus to apply the prophetic denunciations of the Word. The blessed Reformation in some measure let loose these scriptural and primeval truths.\* After much error and opposition, even from devout Christians, there is undeniably a wide-spread revival of the doctrine in our day, an *unclosing* of the Apocalyptic vision, and an *increase of knowledge*, which would seem to indicate that *the time of the end* is nigh (Dan.

\* See the Catechism of Edward VI. on the petition, "Thy kingdom come."

xii. 4, 9). The two great principles at work are, first, an undue regard to the *form of godliness*, whereby man is exalted; and second, the growing light of millennarian doctrines, whereby man is humbled. We believe them to be antagonist principles, and that the increasing acceptance of the latter is a timely and an especial mercy to the Church.

But there are many who say, I hold the doctrine of Christ's second coming at the end of the world, and as to the Millennium, I believe it to be a period of spiritual blessedness before he comes.

Believing that such views throw an indistinctness over the Christian's hope, and greatly tarnish the Redeemer's glory, I would offer a few suggestions connected with this subject. Believers are said in Scripture to *love the appearing of Christ*. But how can they do so, except his *appearing* effect some great change in their favour, far surpassing any glory which the most spiritual condition without Christ can give? There can be no *earnest expectation* in the creature for the Lord's personal return, if the world is to be brought to a state of sinless peace before that event. Such a doctrine may have a nominal place in your creed, but it can have no hold on your affections. The Scriptures plainly contradict such a notion. It is said: *The Lord shall be revealed from heaven with*

*his mighty angels* (the usual description of his personal advent), and his coming will *give* rest to his suffering people—not *find* them at rest—and inflict vengeance on their enemies who will then be troubling them. (2 Thess. i. 7.) The parable of the wheat and the tares also shows that there will be a mixture of good and evil, believers and unbelievers, till the *Lord comes with his angels*. Even the petition which he taught us to use, *Thy will be done, &c.*, is to be offered up till the moment of his appearance ; implying, that there shall be no perfect identity of will between God and *the creature* till Christ shall come and *make all things new*.

Moreover, we are charged with lowering the dignity of Jesus, and lessening the happiness of the believer by these views. This arises from an unscriptural notion of the sources and character of future happiness. Many think that the soul of the believer, on its departure, takes immediate possession of its crown in glory : and they regard heaven as some region of ethereal brightness utterly unconnected with any thing with which they have hitherto been conversant. If it were so—if the soul attain to the full enjoyment of heaven immediately on its separation from the body, then the resurrection itself would be a misfortune. It were better for the body to remain

in the grave than to come forth, under the most favourable circumstances, to corporealize a spirit already satisfied with bliss. *The redemption of the body*, instead of being (as our text declares) the great subject of *earnest expectation*, would then be only a source of regret. No, we contend that the soul, in its disembodied state, cannot receive that measure of happiness which the Creator has in his love provided; and we do so on two grounds:

1. In its separate state the soul is a memorial of sin. Christ *came to destroy the works of the devil*, and that destruction cannot be complete while any mark of sin remains in earth or heaven. The separation of soul and body is the result of sin: and their reunion in perfect glory must be achieved ere the work of redemption can be complete. The petition of our Burial service strikingly illustrates this. "We beseech thee, O Lord, that it may please thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory." The happiness of the soul, then, in its disembodied state, is necessarily imperfect; because its bereavement is a standing testimony that an enemy has done mischief.



*Paradise* is indeed suited to its widowhood, as being free from all taint and strife of sin, and so far it is *made perfect*; but even there (as we have seen) the Spirit longs for the *full adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body*, when its old companion in suffering will become its glorified partaker of the rescued inheritance. The dying believer's soul enters into *rest*, not into full *glory*; *his flesh rests in hope* (Ps. xvi.) *till the Chief Shepherd shall appear*. The surpassing glory of the coming kingdom consists in *being with Christ, and seeing Him as He is*. In our highest anticipations of bliss, we can conceive nothing, desire nothing, more blissful than this; and this is not to be attained (1 John iii. 2) till the Son of man return to the earth again.

2. Another reason for believing that the *redemption of the body* is needful to the consummation of the soul's bliss, is found in the original constitution of man. The Creator, who *is Love*, made us for the enjoyment of Himself; which is the only happiness provided for the reasonable creature. The being whom *God created in his own image* consisted of a body as well as a soul; and thus formed, the Creator declared his condition to be perfect. The mouth of infinite wisdom and goodness pronounced this compound creature *very good*; adapted to his benevolent designs; and

capable of the utmost happiness to which a finite being can attain. Hence, as to the believer, the mercy of their reunion *at the resurrection of the just and the manifestation of the sons of God.*

But the subject rises vastly in interest and importance when we ask, “How does it *practically* affect us?” The great question which we have all to settle is, Am I *prepared to meet God?* or, in other words, Do I *love the appearing of the Lord?* for the Scripture says that *a crown of righteousness* awaits those who do. If conscience tell any of you that you are satisfied with the world as it is, your condition is unutterably sad. You may daily pray with your lips that the kingdom of God may come, but when the *voice of the Archangel* shall proclaim that it is at hand, you will *say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come.*

I know that the most devoted servant of the Lord will have to the last much remaining sin to struggle with; but his heart is with God, and his *affections on things above*; and to him the coming of Christ will be the fulfilment of *earnest expectation.* *Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and*

*hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh:* (James v. 7, 8.) The harvest is not fit for the sickle, till the winter's storm has given firmness to its root, and the suns of spring have strengthened its blade, and nourished its ear to ripeness. And thus are the alternating providences and trials of this groaning condition gradually training *God's husbandry* for the glories of the millennial harvest-day. That day is at hand. The forewarning signs of our Lord's return are gathering a distincter outline in the forecast shadows of on-coming events. In looking back upon the six dark days of labour and sorrow, during which the *whole creation has groaned under the bondage of corruption*, let us comfort one another in this,—that there is already an edging of gold on those clouds, indicating the dawn of a glorious Sabbath—the bright millennial day.

The subject, then, is most practical, most urgent! There is no question that concerns us like this. If you have *repented and been converted*, the coming of the Redeemer will be a *time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*: (Acts iii. 19). But everything, save a settled faith in Jesus, will be found unequal to the fiery trial of those last days. The poison of the serpent will then be offered as *the cup of salvation*. Satan will

clothe himself in the garments of light, as a messenger come from God with the news of *another Gospel*. May you all have wisdom to discern, faith to reject, and strength to escape the subtle snare! Faith it is which brings God into the soul, and gives the mind of Christ. There is in every true believer a oneness of will which simply acquiesces in the doings of God, because it is *renewed after his image*. And thus it is that our Lord puts the expression, *Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven*, into the petition which he has left for the use of every heaven-taught covenanted child of God.

I speak to those who are peculiarly exposed to temptation. With peculiar emphasis, then, would I say to you (and I know my dear brother will not think that in this counsel I am invading his province, but rather strengthening his hands), I would leave this one voice in your ear, and, if the Lord will, in your heart, *Look to Jesus!* Pray for the single eye, that you may look to nothing else but Jesus. Put the crown of your victory on his head alone. Meanwhile, you will have need of all the strength and grace that he has promised you. Get ready for sifting times. There is a cloud of portentous darkness rising out of the sea, already bigger than a man's hand; and ere this generation pass, the atmosphere of the Church may be black with storms. Let every halting soul make haste

to get him up into the chariot of the everlasting Gospel with Jesus. There shall he ride in safety and in peace, amid the struggle of the *last perilous times*, *kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.*

To the waiting and watching servant *the appearing of his Lord* is the sight for which his soul is longing. Till that day of the *adoption*, he is content to *endure hardness, as a good soldier of Christ, reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.* Brethren, till that manifestation of the *Prince of peace*, let us stand in our armour; and, with our back against the rock of the Gospel, *fight the good fight of faith*, that we may finish our course with joy. *There is no discharge in this war till death summon us, or the trump of God proclaim that the Lord is descending from heaven.* Then shall the *dead in Christ arise* from their graves, and *we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:* (1 Thess. iv. 17). There are some sweet hymns provided for that glorious scene, and I will leave one of them on your ear. *Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.* (Isa. xxv. 9.)

## LECTURE XII.

### THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM.

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BY THE  
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LUKE XXIV. 26.

*“ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,  
and to enter into his glory ? ”*

IN bringing this course of sermons to a close, I desire to express my thankfulness to Almighty God for the body of scriptural truth, and the views of Christian practice, which my brethren have been enabled to set before you. Upon such a subject as unfulfilled prophecy, it was not to be expected that a body of Christian ministers, all fallible men, gathered from different parts of the country, should agree in every minute particular of detail. Nor does this affect the general question before us.



It must have been satisfactory, I should trust, to all my hearers, at least to that portion of them who have long been accustomed to search the Scriptures, and who have a real and proper value for Protestantism, to hear the united testimony which has been borne to great and fundamental truths of the Gospel, the fulness of the atonement made for sinners by our adorable Redeemer, the fruits of the sovereign grace of God, manifested towards a fallen world.

It must have been no less gratifying to you to have heard the voice of some raised against the coldness of formality, and the deceitfulness of superstition, while the same voice has not failed to notice the sin of schism, and the blessedness of brethren dwelling together in unity. Nor can I resist expressing a hope that each of my hearers will, in his vocation and ministry exert himself to manifest the practical result of these warnings in his own life and conversation; remembering that, though there are duties incumbent upon the nation at large, there are other duties no less incumbent upon every individual member of the community, seeing that "*no man should seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*" (1 Cor. x. 24.)

It will, perhaps, have been remarked by you, that the present course has been of a more practical character than the last, and that, therefore,

your attention has been less frequently directed to the details of unfulfilled prophecy, and consequently that fewer of the general objections to the study of this most important subject, have been alluded to. It falls, however, to me this evening to refute a very common argument: I mean that the supposition of Christ's personal return to reign in glory upon the throne of his father David is derogatory to the Saviour's honour, is a carnal view, injurious to the growth of spiritual religion, and altogether unworthy of the great scheme of salvation. This, then, I am to refute, by pointing out *the harmony between the cross and the kingdom of Christ*.

May the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind be vouchsafed to me while I endeavour to unfold this interesting subject; and may much grace be given to you, my dear brethren, to receive whatever is spoken in accordance with the Word of God!

Before I enter upon the argument itself, I must venture to remind the objectors, and they are very numerous, that the mere assertion of this doctrine being derogatory to the glory of God, might, with equal propriety, nay, with much greater force, have been adduced by the Jews against Messiah's first advent. Indeed, when they beheld Jesus, they rejected him, exclaiming, "*Is not this the carpenter's son?*" (Matt. xiii. 55.) And

so strongly impressed were they with the certainty of the Christ coming at once to reign in glory that the Jews are represented in the Parable as saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

Whose office is it, I would ask to determine whether this or that is derogatory to the glory of God? We, from whose eyes the veil has, by Divine grace, been removed, tell the Jew, that as the greatness of God's power was manifested by calling the world into being, out of nothing, so it is much more manifested in his redeeming the world by the vicarious atonement of his dear Son. We tell the crucifying Jew that Christ was indeed the Son of God, and that the Word, having been made flesh, dwelt among us, and finally, through their wickedness, was crucified and slain, yet, hard as this is for them to believe, that all happened by *the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* (Acts ii. 23.) We Gentiles are satisfied with this assertion. We condemn the Jew for unbelief—and comfort ourselves with our superior faith—and yet wherein do these objectors to the personal reign of our Lord at his second advent differ in principle from the Jew? I repel their assertion, then, by another, that if it were not derogatory for him, *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the*

*form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, (Phil. ii. 6—8,) it is not more derogatory that he who rose again from the grave, with a body capable of partaking of food, and who ascended up on high in the sight of his apostles, should again descend upon earth in human form as the angels foretold, saying, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts i. 11.)*

But so far from this objection being valid, I purpose proving that the *harmony between the cross and the kingdom* is complete. This I shall do, first, by showing the *reasonableness* of this statement; secondly, *from analogy*; and thirdly, from the *direct assertion of Scripture*.

First, then, *from its reasonableness*. We are taught that, although the seed of the woman shall ultimately bruise the serpent's head, yet for a season the serpent is to bruise his heel. I need not say, that from the hour at which that prophecy was uttered to the present time, Satan has been acting as the prince of this world. If I look to the cradle of the Messiah, I see that though he was "Messiah the Prince," yet for him there was no room in the inn—Satan rejoiced as he saw the

infant Jesus lying dishonoured in the manger. If I follow him in his career I find, that though *the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet the Son of man had not where to lay his head.* Do I read that *He came to his own,* I read again that *His own received him not.* But I need adduce no more upon this subject than the Saviour's words when Judas, possessed by Satan, came to betray him, *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.* Was it then to be expected that this earth, the scene of all the woe, the battle-field of the diabolical conflict was in no wise to be concerned with the glorious return of the Great Captain of our salvation coming forth as he will *conquering and to conquer?* Were men to hear him dishonoured day by day by an ungodly world, were they to see him denied by those whom he had purchased with a price, yea, *crucified afresh and put to an open shame,* and yet to be allowed to escape the humiliation of acknowledging him whom aforetime they had so shamefully and proudly despised? Or was the Redeemer himself (I use the argument with the solemnity which a subject so sacred demands) to be called upon to submit to all the indignities which a stubborn generation might choose to inflict, and not in the glorious majesty of his presence be allowed to see his enemies bow beneath his feet, ready then to "crown him Lord of all?"

Well might the Psalmist say, *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision, for he has set his King upon his holy hill of Zion.* (Ps. ii.) Surely it is to this that our Lord himself alludes when he says, *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.* (Matt. xxv. 31.) And again, when the high priest adjured him by the living God to tell him whether he were the Christ, Jesus said, *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* (Matt. xxvi. 64.) Observe, brethren, that these words were spoken, not to believing Gentiles, but to unbelieving Jews, who for this very reply charged the Lord of Glory with speaking blasphemy. From which I conclude that it is but *reasonable* to expect that those who in the plenitude of their worldly power have reviled the Saviour, shall be witnesses, though not partakers, of his coming glory: in other words, that as Jesus endured the cross amongst men, so shall he among men triumphantly wear the crown.

But again, *It is reasonable to expect that his*



*people should enjoy their Saviour without the intermixture of sin which now alloys their happiness.* I am aware that there is a class of Divines, I trust a class decreasing in weight, if not in numbers, in this Protestant country, who ridicule what is generally termed experimental religion. I confess I am not ashamed of the term, Christian experience; it is a scriptural term (Rom. v. 4), and is one of the fruits of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Great are the comfort and joy which result from union with the Saviour, but still the old Adam remains ever in the regenerate, so that we *cannot do the good that we would*. (Rom. vii. 19.) Sin adulterates and weakens our Christian joy; but the clearer our views are of Jesus the greater is our joy. Our joy will only be complete when we shall see him *face to face*; when we shall *see him as he is*. And yet the recorded desire of our Lord is, that *our joy may be full*. It is reasonable to expect that this desire will be gratified. And when shall this be? Surely when *Satan shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled*. (Rev. xx. 3.) \*

Once more, *It is reasonable to expect* that it shall

\* I am far from asserting that the millennial state is the final consummation of all things, but there is no necessity for entering upon that point in the present sermon.

be made manifest that the crucified one is the Lord of glory. Time was when *many were astonished at him ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.* (Isa. lii. 14.) Time was when *he was offered to bear the sins of many ;* but time will be, when *unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* (Heb. ix. 28.) *And then shall every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, say, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.* (Rev. v. 13.)

II. But I refrain from continuing this line of reasoning, and pass on to the *arguments from analogy.* I think you will invariably find that suffering in some shape has always been the path which leads to glory. I might commence this view of my subject by an illustration from the vegetable kingdom, even as our blessed Lord did himself in addressing Andrew and Philip, *The hour, said he, is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* (John xii. 23, 24.) Clearly implying that as corruption in the vegetable kingdom, which is

equivalent to death in the animal kingdom, is essential to fructification, so death and suffering in Jesus must necessarily precede his glory. Or again, as St. Paul reasons in 1 Cor. xv. 36, 37, 38, after stating that *Christ is the first fruits*, he continues his argument by asserting, *That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.* This implying very nearly the same truth as that which is imbodyed in Heb. ii. 10, *For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

It will, however, be more useful, very briefly to set before you a few of the types of our blessed Saviour. Amongst them I may mention ISAAC. Who can fail to see that in his painful three days' journey to the land of Moriah (Gen. xxii.), he was an eminent instance of the saint commencing with trial and ending in triumph? Look again at JOSEPH, and see that pious youth hated of his brethren; sold into Egypt; falsely accused; unjustly imprisoned; subsequently raised to the highest rank in the state, and to be the deliverer

of his brethren. Turn to the history of MOSES, and see the little infant, cradled in the bulrushes, a stranger in the land of Midian, suffering affliction with the people of God. Mark his onward career as the lawgiver to Israel, and the chosen mediator of the people of God. Behold DAVID, too, hunted about by Saul, as *the partridge in the mountains*; and yet the anointed one of God, the man after God's own heart, to whom the Lord was specially pleased to reveal that he had put away his sin, and chosen him as the progenitor of Jesus.

Thus we see that as in the types of the Lord Jesus they passed through suffering to glory, so we have no reason to deny, and every reason for maintaining, that there is a perfect *harmony between the cross and the kingdom* of the antitype, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I may pass on, then, to the offices of Christ, and from ANALOGY again infer the *harmony between the cross and the kingdom*. No believer denies that the offices of our blessed Saviour are threefold. He is to his people PROPHET, PRIEST, and KING, A prophet to teach, a priest to atone, a king to rule. When our blessed Lord was first manifested in the flesh, and commenced his ministry here on earth, he took the office of PROPHET. He declared that the Scripture was now fulfilled which spake of the Spirit of the Lord having anointed

him to preach the Gospel, and (Mark i. 14,) we read that *Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God*. This work, then, for the space of more than three years, was carried on by this Divine Prophet or Teacher in a personal form, and in the sight of men. No one who admits that Jesus is come in the flesh attempts to deny this fact. I pass on, then, to the second office, that of PRIEST. *Every High Priest*, says St. Paul, (Heb. viii. 3,) *is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer*. Toward the close of our Lord's continuing upon earth, we find that an offering was made, *He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*. (Eph. v. 2.) As without blood there was no remission, so the precious blood of Jesus was shed for the sins of the whole world. His body was committed to the grave; his soul descended into Hades; on the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and shortly after ascended up on high. The sacrifice had been slain, but, as under the old dispensation, the high priest *entered into the second tabernacle, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people*: *The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*. *But Christ being*

*come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* In other words, our great High Priest ascended into heaven, there personally to present himself before his Father; there personally to intercede for us; there personally to be a remembrancer to his God and our God, of the greatness of the sacrifice and fulness of the atonement made for man. You will remark, then, that as far as the prophetic and priestly office of Christ are concerned, they were carried on separately and consecutively; i.e., they were not exercised contemporaneously, but first the one and then the other; and furthermore, that they were exercised by our Lord in his human nature. It is fair, then, to argue from this, that whatever weight we may give to a spiritual dominion in the heart of the believer, yet that when we speak of the kingdom of Christ, we have a right to infer that the third office of our Lord will be discharged personally, separately, consecutively. In other words, that the sufferings of Jesus, so far from being a hindrance to this triumph, only contribute to the unity of that career which began with the cross, and will end with the crown.



I have only further to remind you upon this point, that this kingdom is future. Christ has not reigned as yet. Hitherto Satan has been the prince of this world ; if it were not so, our Lord would not have enjoined us to *seek first his kingdom*, and daily to pray that his *kingdom may come*. For bear in mind, the Lord's prayer is not the prayer of an unconverted man, but the prayer of a man who is a child of God, and who has *received the spirit of adoption, whereby he may cry, Abba, Father*. This prayer will no longer be required when the time shall have arrived for the sounding of the seventh angel, *and there shall be great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. (Rev. xi. 15.)

III. Let me now direct your attention to the express assertions upon this subject from the Word of God. I have dwelt hitherto upon the reasonableness of the subject before me, as well as its probability, from the analogy of Scripture. I have done so in order that none may attempt to explain away the inspired Word upon that Infidel principle which denies Scripture upon the plea of its doctrines being unreasonable. Not, however, that this mode of arguing is necessary, for the first great question with every humble-minded Christian ought to be, *What saith the Scripture?* and his

reply to every Infidel doubt ought to be, *Let God be true and every man a liar*. I need not say, that Scripture teems with allusions to the kingdom; seeing that St. Peter (1 Peter i. 11), tells us that *the prophets searched diligently what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*. And our Lord himself inquires in the language of our text, *ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?* I may, then, first refer you to that well-known prophecy in Isaiah ix. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. This is fulfilled; but mark the sequence. And the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this*. Now, I confess, I cannot understand that system of interpretation which would insist upon Isaiah's prophecy being interpreted literally, when he says, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*; and would refuse to under-

stand his prophecy literally when he speaks of this child being upon the throne of David, and would pronounce such an interpretation derogatory to the honour of God and his Christ.

Turn again to Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9, and you will find the apostle closely connects with his reign—indeed, even makes his reign a consequence of—the sufferings of Jesus. For he says, *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* And compare with this, Psalm cx. 7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head,* and you have again the same truth, the same connexion of suffering and triumph, and therefore another testimony to the *Harmony between the Cross and the Kingdom.*

I must now remind you that this doctrine which I have thus briefly handled, is no unimportant theory. The subject was chosen, not to justify idle curiosity but at once to warn the ungodly and comfort the believer. To warn those ungodly ones who call themselves Christians, and never yet knew what it is to carry the cross for their

Master's sake ; who comfort themselves with the luxuries of this world, gratifying themselves with giving away that which they do not want, like Dives in the parable, utterly regardless of the solemn account they will have to give at the Lord's Advent ; and who venture to think that they may have the good opinion of all their fellow-men, and yet be disciples of Christ. Again, I say, *Let God be true and every man a liar*. The Word of God declares *Friendship with the world is enmity with God*. (James iv. 4.) *Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God*. (Acts xiv. 22.) If, therefore, you have the good word of all men, you will do well to doubt whether you have the praise of God. It is better to think that you yourselves may be in the wrong, rather than that God's word is untrue.

But it is intended to comfort you who are brought into trial, and who, for the cause of our common Master, have either suffered from the violence of the persecutor or the malevolence of the scoffer. Christ is himself the type of his people. Was he to suffer and then to reign ? So ARE YOU. If we *suffer, we shall also reign with him*. (2 Tim. ii. 12.) Yes, my brethen, it is easy for the prejudiced formalist to deny the proposition before us ; it is easy for the thoughtless scoffer to shake his head and say, these things are not so ; it is easy

for the careless worldling to ask, what matter is it if these things be so? They will not happen in my day. How knowest thou that they will not happen in thy day, thou self-satisfied dogmatiser? Did the Lord mean to assure thee they should not happen in thy day, when he said, *In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh?* (Matt. xxiv. 44.) You are ready, perhaps too ready, to condemn any preacher or writer who may boldly state his own conviction that the return of the Lord will be in our time. But if that be presumption, what, I would ask, is that assumption of foreknowledge which would allow you to assert that this *will* not, *cannot*, be in our generation? I am not surprised, indeed, at this boldness (shall I call it by no harsher term?) when I see the anxiety with which men *join house to house and lay field to field; whose inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations, calling their lands after their own names.* (Ps. xlix. 11.) If the former misinterprets Scripture, and I am far from saying that may not be the case—YOU deny it. The one may be an error of the *head*, but yours is the sin of the *heart*.

You will use your own discretion (and God give you the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind!) as to the way in which you may receive this topic, but I am bound to tell you that

upon the truth or error of these statements depends the correctness of your views as to the nature of the kingdom Believers will inherit. Paul says *we shall reign with Christ*. In Rev. v. 10, we read, *we shall reign on the earth*. It must follow, then, that Christ will reign on the earth. Let, then, each Believing brother comfort himself with the assurance *that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory*. (Col. iii. 4.)

Be of good cheer, then, all of you who know what it is to sorrow for the loss of those near and dear to you. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory hereafter to be revealed in you. In the kingdom there shall be no sorrow. In the kingdom there shall be no sin, no sorrow, no sickness. In the kingdom you shall experience that, though here you have been amongst that *sect which is everywhere spoken against*. (Acts xxviii. 22.) Yet there you will be amongst that *blessed multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, who shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*. (Rev. vii. 9, 10.)

But as to such of you as are *mere professors* of reli-



gion, well may we tremble for you on that great day of discrimination. On that day when he shall appear who is *glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save*, He will indeed be a Saviour to his people, but will *tread down his enemies in His anger, and trample them in his fury*. *For the day of vengeance is in his heart, though the year of the Redeemed may be come.* (Is. lxiii.) The year of the Redeemed come!! Yes, the establishment of the kingdom, for the coming of which you so often *profess* to pray. *Pray* for it you *cannot*—pray for it you *dare* not. If *only* professors, that day will witness the veil torn from your hypocritical hearts, and hear you commanded to depart as unknown, and yet too well known, unto the place appointed for the devil and his angels! Then will unconverted men, who have again and again been warned that they must be born again, who have smiled as they have been reminded in the language of our Lord, *Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again.* (John iii.) Then, I repeat, will unconverted men understand that *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* (John iii. 3.) Then will the unregenerate comprehend those words which they have heard aforetime and not understood, read and not applied, *Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them,*

*bring hither and slay them before me, (Luke xix. 27,) while you, my brethren, who, by grace, have been changed in heart and converted to God, shall hear the King of kings saying to you, Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Hearken then, brethren, to these two distinct and different sentences. Lay them up in your hearts. Look well to their meaning, you who are rich and prosperous, lest in this world only you *have your reward*. Be comforted you that are poor, knowing that God has chosen the *poor in this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom.*

It is delightful, dear brethren in the Lord, to reflect upon the blessings which are in store for us in that day. Then shall we be reunited to those near and dear to us, from whom death may have caused a temporary separation, but who, having fallen asleep in Jesus, shall then be summoned to be for ever with our common Lord. Then shall we be no longer harassed by any of those unnecessary causes of religious differences which abound in the present day. Then shall it be unnecessary to try the spirits, whether they be of God, for we shall be safely kept by the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. No longer shall we complain of wandering thoughts, coldness

of love, weakness of faith, difficulty in prayer, and inability to praise, for there, with the heavenly choir, shall we be enabled continually to sing, *Blessing and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Keep looking for the appearing of the Lord, and *think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.* (1 Pet. iv. 12.)

But I must draw to a conclusion. Christian Brethren, the hearing of these Sermons cannot be a matter of indifference. They have been delivered by a number of Ministers, not for self-display, not because it is usual to give you additional opportunities of attending Divine worship during the season of Lent, not to gratify your curiosity in hearing a variety of preachers, but because the subject is one of the highest interest and importance to your eternal welfare. I repeat, then, you cannot have heard this course of lectures without incurring great responsibility. The subject cannot be lightly thrown aside. It is not, then, what you may think, or what I may think. It is not whether death in your opinion may be a stronger motive, or even whether death be *as strong* a motive to watch-

fulness and holiness of life, as the doctrine of the Second Advent. But *what saith the Scripture?* I confess I know not how to measure the humility of that critic who will venture practically to assert that he knows better than the great Inspirer of the apostles, what will, and what will not, awaken the Sinner. You may say, there is time enough yet for change, that the Lord delayeth his coming; but the warnings, the scriptural warnings, which you have heard in this course, will rise up and condemn you. Oh, let not this be the sad termination to your earthly career, for *we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

Study, then, the sure word of prophecy more carefully! Compare spiritual things with spiritual. Pray for the oil of Divine grace more fervently! Wait for the return of your Lord with more watchfulness and anxiety! You may stand comparatively alone; the ungodly may rage; scoffers may rail; but there is an appointed time when *he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* God give you grace to prepare to meet him!

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